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MICHEL TREMBLAY: TOMORROW MORNING, MONTREAL!

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Michel Tremblay: Tomorrow Morning, Montreal!" submitted by William A. Ives in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis, Michel Tremblay: Tomorrow Morning, Montreal!, is an English translation of the play, Demain matin Montreal m'attend, by Quebec playwright, Michel Tremblay. The introduction to the translation discusses the theatrical works of Michel Tremblay and attempts to place Demain matin Montreal m'attend within the overall context of his dramatic writing. A final section of the introduction discusses some of the problems of translating from Joual, the Quebec dialect of French in which this play is written, into an acceptable English idiom.

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THE THEATRE OF MICHEL TREMBLAY

In 1973, Michel Tremblay and his friend, director André Brassard, attended a garden party in a working class neighbourhood of east end Montreal. The party was held in their honour by a group of housewives from the area, and in addition to Tremblay and Brassard, the guests included a cabaret singer and a number of transvestites, one of whom claimed to be a duchess. At the beginning of the party, everyone was on his (or her) best behaviour, but as the afternoon progressed, tension began to develop between the housewives and their guests. The tension turned into a free-for-all, and the party disintegrated. The guests departed, shouting insults at their hostesses as they fled under a barrage of invective from the women.

If the foregoing description sounds unlikely, it is, because the events described were actually part of a staged experiment. The housewives were in reality actresses improvising around the roles of the belles-soeurs in Michel Tremblay's play, Les Belles-soeurs. The guests were in actuality actors and actresses improvising around the roles they performed in another of Tremblay's plays, Demain matin Montréal m'attend. The event was staged for television for the English-language network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation by Tremblay and Brassard to see what might happen when typical urban working-class housewives came into close contact with the bizarre denizens of the Montreal nightlife scene. Everything was staged and planned in advance: everything, that is, except what actually happened. Oddly, even the actors themselves had no idea that a fight would result from their actions. The assumed roles evidently had become too personalized.

Even the actors themselves had become caught up in what essentially mirrored a collision of two incompatible cultures. The full power of this collision was brought home personally to the participants in this pièce de théâtre, and Tremblay, on the same telecast, described his own reaction to the event as one of the most moving experiences of his life. Perhaps for the first time he himself had been brought to feel something of the experience he has tried to bring home to the public since August, 1968 when his first play, Les Belles-soeurs opened in Montreal. Since then, Michel Tremblay has been bringing these two worlds together in some eleven plays, and the reverberations of his theatrical exploits have been felt far beyond his native Montreal. Michel Tremblay has been perpetrating the same outrage felt by the housewives in the television experiment on his audiences, both inside and outside Quebec. He has made so many people uncomfortable with his theatrical visions of life in contemporary Quebec, that he has been vilified from every quarter of critical acclaim. But by 1975, some critics were hailing him by saying, "Tremblay can safely and justifiably be described as Canada's best playwright."[1] Today he candidly acknowledges his own image as the newest Father of Quebec Theatre. He says, "I find it sad that Quebec still needs heroes in each category. There is the dramatic author, that's me."[2]

At first, both the adverse criticism and acclaim came from Michel Tremblay's own province, Quebec. Indeed, it was that province

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1. David Billington, "Citadel's Forever Yours . . . . ," Edmonton Journal, April 4, 1975.

2. "Michel Tremblay talks about . . . ," translated by Celine-Lise Hill. Programme notes, Citadel Theatre. Edmonton, Alberta, March 22, 1975.

of Quebec and its problems which were the underlying motivations behind Tremblay's writing. "My theatre is essentially political,"[3] Tremblay has stated. He sees his own writing very much as a political act in terms of the future of Quebec. His plays frequently reflect his own attitudes towards contemporary Quebec and its move to become a distinct political entity. Of his play, Forever Yours, Marie-Lou, and of the characters, he said:

> I said to myself, 'That's it, I've got it.' I really wanted to make Marie-Lou and Leopold the Quebec of the past that never talked to each other (when they do talk, it's too late, they kill each other and make Manon, a sort of stagnant Quebec. Because at the beginning of the Sixties we woke up, it was really beautiful. We thought we were really clever but all of a sudden in the 70's we came down again. . . . Now I wanted to make Carmen an image of an Awkward Quebec that is nevertheless right. Even if we have a revolution, it's obvious that there will be 10 to 20 years when we will be eating shit like in Cuba. The people who think that we will have a revolution and then everything after that will be roses that's not true! So Carmen was a believable picture of a Quebec, a little western, a little stupid, but at least free.[4]

His statements in this interview are clear indications of his political concerns. Tremblay is deeply involved with the struggle of Quebec and its French-speaking population to achieve its own political identity, and his concerns are based very much on issues which have been raised in many other and less temperate ways for many years in Quebec. Politics is a subject near to the heart of most Quebecois. The culture of Quebec has had a history of struggle with other cultures, and this has profoundly affected the Quebecois character. Thus, for Tremblay's plays to be understood in any depth, they must be examined in the light

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3. André Vanasse, "Michel Tremblay. Les bibittes des autres," Le Maclean, September, 1972, p. 21.

4. "Michel Tremblay talks about . . . ," interview translated by Celine-Lise Hill. Programme notes, Citadel Theatre. Edmonton, Alberta, March 22, 1975.

of Quebec's very immediate sense of its own political history.

Practically from the beginning of the history of French Quebec, the population has been very much dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. When Britain won Quebec in the decisive battle of 1759 on the Plains of Abraham, the majority of the French elite left for France, leaving an emerging agrarian society and the institution of the Church -- both of which the British left more or less alone. The Church was instrumental in maintaining the stability of the abandoned French-speaking culture in the face of the new British takeover in economic and political affairs. As time went on, two societies grew up beside each other: in general, a small English-speaking merchant class who controlled the economy, and a much larger French-speaking class of farmers. Later, with increased urbanization and industrialization, many rural Quebecois migrated to the cities and a class of labourers and factory workers grew up. All of the people in the latter two categories were educated by, and therefore very much under the control of the Church. This situation, in spite of time, two world wars, and mass immigration from many other countries has remained polarized along the aforementioned lines right up to the present.

Naturally this co-existence of two separate peoples within one political entity brought about many tensions over the years, but it was not until the 1960's that these tensions reached a breaking point. At this time the government of Quebec began the process of secularizing the school system by placing itself above the Church as the authority over education. This was a decisive step in the removal of the Church as the moulder of the Quebecois mind. Also during this period, and very much part of this same phenomenon, the resentment of a growing, highly-educated segment of the French-speaking population

built to an explosive point against the entrenched anglophone economic and cultural domination of Quebec. The first serious mutterings of separatism were heard as the first of the terrorist bombs exploded in the streets of English-speaking sections of Montreal. The révolution tranquille had begun.

Since that time Quebec has been in the throes of an unprecedented period of rapid change and readjustment. The largest Canadian province with a largely uneducated francophone labour force dominated by a largely educated anglophone class has moved with amazing rapidity towards becoming an independent nation, economically controlled by an indigenous and educated francophone population.

This context, of a restive Quebec in the 1960's and 1970's, is the light under which one must examine the works of Michel Tremblay, and indeed the works of the majority of Quebec authors and artists of this period. It has been a period of much cultural soul-searching and political drum-beating which are reflected in many aspects of Quebecois artistic endeavour. Michel Bélair in Le Nouveau Théâtre québecois takes 1960 as the turning point in Quebec for the beginning of a new Quebecois theatre. He points out that the Quebecois, in taking stock of themselves as a people, perhaps even as an independent nation, have given a new direction to their theatre. From the problems concerning the whole Canadian scene, Quebec writers have turned to problems and ideas of a specifically Quebecois nature, concerning themselves with the development of the Quebecois culture and identity. In short, the new Quebec theatre is a political theatre, and any detailed look into the works of Quebec writers in the 1960's and 1970's must take this fact into account.

Michel Tremblay is no exception, and, in fact, Bélair marks the birth of the new political theatre, the new Quebecois theatre, with the first production of Tremblay's Les Belles-soeurs in 1968. Les Belles-soeurs concerns a woman, Germaine Lauzon, who invites her neighbourhood friends, her "sisters-in-law," to help her glue trading stamps into booklets. For most of the play, the women gossip and talk about the tedium and misery of their lives in the east end slums of Montreal. With Les Belles-soeurs, for the first time on the Quebec stage there was a play about the Quebecois, the real, everyday people of the Montreal streets. There were no more of the wealthy upper-middle-class characters of the later plays of Marcel Dubé and Gratien Gélinas, and nothing of the soul-searching themes of finding a place within the Canadian society as a whole. Instead, Tremblay presented people that the majority of the Quebecois could see and recognize as real. Here, virtually for the first time in Quebec theatre, the ideas and concerns of the common, everyday Quebec citizen were shown. Tremblay, rather than make a direct political statement, such as was being vaguely hinted at in Gélinas' Hier les enfants dansaient, had, in fact, created a whole new theatrical world which, by ignoring the larger political issues of Quebec vs. Canada, created an enclosed, totally Quebecois vision. That vision has since become a rallying point in the great identification crisis which has been part and parcel of Quebec's political awakening.

Tremblay's political message in Les Belles-soeurs was not only that of exorting the intelligentsia of Quebec to stand up for their rights. It showed the Quebecois a vision of themselves they had never seen before, and the revelation came to many as one of the political

turning points of the révolution tranquille. While the F.L.Q. planted bombs and kidnapped diplomats, and while other playwrights of the "new" wave addressed themselves more directly to issues of political and economic import, Tremblay had proclaimed his own political statement by virtually ignoring these things, and by painting a picture of life as it is right now, for the average Quebecois. Instead of bombs and political fulminations, Tremblay in Les Belles-soeurs gave Quebec a vision of itself. And this vision may have turned out to be one of the most important political acts of the quiet revolution.

In Les Belles-soeurs the plight of the disillusioned east-end housewives, locked in the dreary embrace of equally disillusioned husbands and outworn morality, cuts close to the majority of Quebecois. Tremblay had brought the unreasoned rules binding Quebecois society together in a more-or-less miserable situation and had thrown them up to clinical examination.

However, Tremblay went far beyond the portrayal of realistic characters in realistic situations. He portrayed them as speaking exactly as they would speak if they were real people. He let them speak Joual, the dialect of French spoken in Quebec, which virtually every Quebecois understands and which the great majority speaks, and which had never before been employed in Quebec theatre. Until the production of Les Belles-soeurs, Joual was referred to as bad French, even by many Quebecois who spoke it habitually. Here then, suddenly, was a play about real people who spoke their own language. The consequences were enormous. Suddenly Quebec had its own written language. Dictionaries of Joual began to be compiled as more people became interested in documenting the grammar and vocabulary of Joual as serious-

ly as they would any other newly-discovered language. The difference here, of course, was that this "newly-discovered" language had been there all along. Les Belles-soeurs picked up the Quebecois language and played with it, working with its melodies and rhythms and delighting audiences with both its beauty and its ugliness.

Reaction to the play was outspoken from both sides. The old guard deplored the decadent morality and the further deterioration of the French language. The new wave praised the exposure of a bankrupt morality and extolled the formation of a new language, or, at least, the recognition of the way the majority of the population spoke. The proof lay in the immense success of the play and the resulting rise of Michel Tremblay to a position as leader of the Quebec theatre scene. Audiences flocked to Les Belles-soeurs in 1968, and then to succeeding Tremblay works as they were produced.

Each time, they were shown further visions of their own society in language exactly appropriate to the situation. In A toi pour toujours, ta Marie-Lou (Forever Yours, Marie-Lou), as Tremblay himself explained in the interview quoted previously, ideas seem to take human form as protagonists in a chilling vision of life in Quebec today. Manon, the religious fanatic, vs. Carmen, the easy-lay of the Club Rodeo, and Leopold, the disillusioned factory worker, vs. Marie-Lou the frigid and perpetually unsatisfied wife, are squared up for a battle which wreaks death and destruction but which never really ends. The Church, the new morality, the exploited and exploitative living conditions are all portrayed in Marie-Lou in the living colour of Joual employed deftly and viciously. The play makes an important political statement in its almost allegorical account of some of the major forces

affecting Quebec society today. Again Quebec is held up to view in all its beauty and all its ugliness, and as with Les Belles-soeurs, many audience members were repelled and shocked by what they saw. However, more were fascinated.

Today, Michel Tremblay has had plays performed on television, and his works have appeared on numerous stages within Quebec. Through media exposure he, as well as the characters he has created, have come to be well known throughout Quebec, and the acceptance of this new and more real image of Quebec life and language has helped raise the general consciousness of many Quebecois.

But to regard Tremblay's writing for the stage solely within the political framework of today's Quebec is to ignore a very important fact. That fact is, that nearly all of his major plays have been translated into English and are enjoying as much popularity in English Canada as they are in Quebec. Tremblay's creative impulses may be politically motivated, but the impact of his work encompasses far more. In fact, the success that Tremblay has had, even within Quebec, is probably much more an indication of the effectiveness of the plays and quality of the theatrical experiences than any political ideas he may have been working from. Certainly in 1968 the ideas were not new, but the way in which they were presented was. The precise chords Tremblay struck in his audience and the way in which he struck them were what brought people to the theatre and are now, in English Canada doing the same thing.

In the 1960's Quebec may have been in the initial stages of a period of political strife, but at the same time a whole new wave of consciousness was being felt all throughout the western world. The hippy generation and the dawning of the Age of Aquarius were phenomena

of the mid-1960's alongside the révolution tranquille. Heralded by the Beatles and accompanied by anti-war protests, "Love" and "Peace" became the slogans of the times, and the whole of western society began to engage in some very serious philosophical re-examination. Love and understanding lay at the base of the new-age philosophy, and liberation became the order of the day as blacks, women, and gays, as well as Quebecois, began to attack outmoded philosophical concepts and to preach adoption of a new code through the paths of self-awareness. No person could be free without first knowing who he was and accepting that knowledge. Shaking off the shackles of convention, routine, guilt, and unhappiness became concerns of large numbers of people, both inside and outside Quebec.

This theme of self-awareness and self-realization is evident in all of Trémblay's writing. All of his characters suffer more or less directly from failure on their own part to assume responsibility for their own lives. The crutches of religion and marriage, for example, become cages for many of Tremblay's characters. They become embittered and ossified in unhappy situations through refusal to do away with the conventions and to come to terms with a reality untainted by the constraints of traditional teaching. Leopold chooses to kill himself, his wife, Marie-Lou, and their son rather than confront the real problems besetting their marriage -- mainly, their own incapability to come to terms with crude reality in the form of boring routine and a stale, meaningless relationship.

By contrast to the characters like the embittered Leopold and Marie-Lou are the characters who want to break away from the traditional way of looking at things. Carmen in Marie-Lou and Pierrette in Les Belles-soeurs are two striking examples of the spirits who realize

they are trapped and who have consciously set about to make their lot better. These two and many of the characters of the night-time demimonde revealed in Demain matin Montréal m'attend are trying to escape the torments of lives like those of Germaine Lauzon and Marie-Lou. Many of these escapees become caught in other traps of their own making, as happens to Cuirette and Hosanna in Hosanna. These two figures, homosexuals, having opted out of "normal" society in order to live more happily, are in turn trapped in a relationship which bizarrely parodies the wearisome and destructive marriages depicted in the other plays.

This idea of breaking out, of realization of the self, is easily accessible to anyone and is not applicable merely in the context of Quebec. The milieux Tremblay picks in which to place his characters are common to societies on both sides of the Quebec border. The conflicts presented by juxtaposing the two worlds -- the east end slums and the night-time world of downtown Montreal -- are expressive of the same culture shock being felt all through Western society in confrontation with many of these same ideas.

The love and compassion with which Tremblay portrays these universal concerns can be perceived by anyone. Hosanna, in spite of its alien aspect to the majority of "straight" theatre-goers, has enjoyed an amazing popularity. Hosanna and Cuirette act out their everyday domestic problems with vicious remarks and biting comments and, in the end, clutch each other in a lovers' embrace. That the average audience can take this voyage with Tremblay and share in his compassion for the two lovers is testimony to his ability to convey the basic humanity of his characters.

Tremblay shows his characters as real people, with their faults and with their good points. That they come from what would

appear to be opposing camps never takes away from their basic humanity. In the course of a performance the audience is made aware of the circumstances which have moulded the characters into what they are. The spectator might feel anger or be repelled by what the characters have made of themselves, but he is always aware of why the characters act the way they do. The psychological implications of the relationships, for instance, in Marie-Lou, are readily apparent. Manon's morbidity is directly the result of her unhealthy attachment to her mother, who in turn is plagued by her own religious feelings about sex and life in general. Carmen, on the other hand, sees these forces at work and attempts to break away from them. As the nature of the characters' relationships is gradually revealed, the audience is led to understand intellectually the web in which they are all caught.

Such realism is not new in theatre, but the skill with which Tremblay fleshes out his characters beyond a collection of ideas, and the deftness of his manipulation of their actions indicates Tremblay's basic understanding of what it means to be a human being. In spite of much of the general tenour of seediness and squalor, and of discontent and anger in his work, Tremblay's vision is not one of grim acceptance of life in a meaningless universe. The stage world of Tremblay, far from being a relentless barrage of serious dialogue and painful situations, is hilariously funny.

Michel Tremblay's plays reveal a wonderful sense of humour which constantly surfaces to take the bitter edge off the more painful aspects of the realities he depicts. Outrageous wit in the dialogue and the outrageous actions of the characters function throughout the plays to lighten the tone of the various situations. Tremblay juxtaposes the seriousness of his intent with the humour of his own vision,

thereby relieving much of the oppressive heaviness of mood and atmosphere which a totally serious viewpoint could not alleviate.

The opening scene in En pièces détachées, translated into English as Like Death Warmed Over, reveals a good example of dialogue where humour is employed to defuse what would otherwise appear as an orchestrated series of harangues and arguments. Tremblay lightens the overall tone of the dialogue, which takes place between a number of east end Montreal housewives on their balconies, by exaggerating their outspokenness.

> MME TREMBLAY
> Better that than he should grow up a bum, like that Richard of yours, Mme Beaulieu!
>
> MME MENARD
> André, sweetheart.
>
> MME TREMBLAY
> Michel, you little son-of-a-gun, I'm gonna break your leg for you, and then see how far you can pedal!
>
> MME BELANGER
> Ah, shut up, Aurèle, for Chrissake! If I wanna drink a whole case of cokes, it's my business!
>
> . . .
>
> MME TREMBLAY
> Michel! Ah, well, the hell with him . . . No sense yellin' out your lungs for nothing . . . I just hope he has an accident![5]

The extremity of the language used in this scene tends to take the edge off the desperate bitterness revealed in these characters. Amidst the noise and confusion of this crowd scene, Tremblay seems to point his finger at each one of the characters and laugh. One senses that even in the most tragic characters of the plays, Michel Tremblay has found

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5. Michel Tremblay, Like Death Warmed Over, trans. by Allan Van Meer, (Toronto: Playwrights' Co-op, 1973), p. 2.

humour. In effect, he has taken each of his major characters and pushed them over the boundaries of strict realism into caricature, all the while keeping the caricatures so controlled as to maintain their reality as individuals. In the characters one sees the motivations and pressures which prompt them to behave in their particular fashion at the same time as one sees them set up as types with all their risible eccentricities and foibles.

"Stereotypical" situations and "stereotypical" people abound in Michel Tremblay's plays, yet because they are part of a framework of realistic events and actions, they become at once tragically realistic characters and situation comedy figures. They are people whose values and lives have become twisted and debased while at the same time they share the mannerisms and idiosyncrasies which make them both human and laughable in a most delightful sense. Les Belles-soeurs contains an example of this duality of tragic and comic, and of individual and stereotype. At the beginning of the play, Germaine Lauzon is trying to talk Linda, her daughter, into staying home and helping her glue her newly acquired million trading stamps into booklets. In the ensuing argument, built upon the very realistic lines of a real family argument, Germaine finally loses all patience. In the course of her explosion we find out that much of her life has been a disappointment. She curses her life and exclaims how fed up she is with everything.

GERMAINE
That's right, you've always said so, I'm dumb. Okay, Linda, go ahead, do what you like. That's all you ever do anyway, it's nothing new. Christ, I can't have a bit of pleasure for myself. Someone's always got to spoil it for me. It's okay, Linda, if that's what you want, go ahead. Go to your goddamn show!

LINDA
Come on, Ma, try to understand.

GERMAINE

> I don't want to understand. I don't even want to hear about it. I kill myself for the whole bunch of you and what do I get in return? Nothing! A big fat nothing![6]

Germaine is trapped and feels that her way out is going to be the million trading stamps. Linda is also trapped and has her own very real reasons for not wanting to spend the evening with her mother. Their language is plain, frank, and precisely to the point. Both the characters and the argument seem realistic. There is humour in the argument, but it begins to show up brilliantly when Germaine, after the dispute is over, is talking to her sister, explaining all the things she intends to buy with the stamps.

> . . . I think I'll be able to take everything and do over the whole house. I'm gonna get a new stove, new fridge, new kitchen set. I think I'll take the red one with the gold stars. I don't think you've seen that one, have you? . . .[7]

The list goes on and on, from red kitchen sets with gold stars, through Chinese velvet paintings, to synthetic nylon carpets. As she prattles on, the individual Germaine is pushed over the edge to become a stereotypical housewife. The question of her taste and compulsive need for all these material possessions revealed by this long repetitious discourse becomes hilariously funny. Tremblay has created an individual Germaine Lauzon whose life is torn by disappointment, and then, by adding all the extras, the specifics of Germaine's personality, he makes her a comical type.

This deadly serious/humourous effect found in the characters' language and actions is echoed in the settings in which

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6. Michel Tremblay, Les Belles-soeurs, trans. by John van Burek and Bill Glassco (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1974), p. 9.

7. Ibid., p. 12.

Tremblay places his characters. In order to heighten the effect of the play, he collects specific objects and pieces of furniture and seemingly adds them, one by one until he has painted the right background. The opening business in Hosanna indicates the detail Tremblay uses to complete his total effect.

> The only personal touches in this depressing set are: (1) on the coffee table an awful plaster imitation of "David," as deformed and grotesque as one could imagine, too big for the table . . .
>
> . . . a vanity table surmounted by a huge mirror, covered with innumerable pots of cream, lipstick, brushes and bottles of all sizes and colours; . . .
>
> Through the window, every five seconds, inexorably, the neon sign from the "Pharmacie Beaubien" flashes on and off.[8]

Each piece, from the ugly David statue to the blinking neon sign, tells the audience something more about the people who inhabit the apartment and the conditions which have helped make them the way they are. The realism of the created effect shows and comments darkly on the plight of the characters, but the abundance of recognizable objects and the collectivity of the associations they bring to the comment tinge it with humour.

The humour is not without a catch. Many of the laugh lines in the script drip acid. Another example from Hosanna:

> HOSANNA
> I wasn't talking to you . . . You're not so important that I talk to you all the time. You're not that important! Besides, in that idiot outfit you look so little like a man, if anyone heard me calling you a bitch they'd take you for a lesbian![9]

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8. Michel Tremblay, Hosanna, trans., by John van Burek and Bill Glassco (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1974), p. 7-8.

9. Ibid., p. 17.

The audience may laugh at such a line and the way it is said. The vulgarity and wit shines through. But the content is the other side of Tremblay's double-edged humour. The feelings expressed and the reasons for them are often not funny at all. Later in the play, when Cuirette jibes at Hosanna about her appearance, also to the amusement of the audience, Hosanna responds by jabbing out her cigarette on Cuirette's forehead. He jumps, exclaiming, "Hey, you fucking maniac!"[10] and the audience laughs even more. Certainly there is nothing intrinsically funny in the action, but the startled reaction brings the laugh. Even Hosanna's traumatic humiliation at the masquerade ball becomes funny in Cuirette's retelling. Nearly everything humourous in this and other Tremblay plays has a serious side to it. Thus, the realism of the plays, coupled with the often bitter seriousness of the themes is cushioned by the humour, and in turn, the witty and farcical comic aspects of the plays are given depth by the pitiable reality in which they function. The dreadful oppressiveness of the atmosphere, in a play such as Marie-Lou is softened by the humour, and the delightful and hilarious campiness and frivolity of La Duchesse de Langeais is given far more significant meaning by the suffering and pain of the character of the Duchess.

The overall impact of these juxtapositions is strengthened by the way in which Tremblay structures his plays for the theatre. Every opportunity is taken to explore and exploit theatrical conventions in order to obtain the best results. Beyond attention to visual detail, and beyond the uses of the colourful Joual, Tremblay's plays have a

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10. Ibid., p. 30.

"theatricality" which makes them quite outstanding. While in some respects the plays are totally realistic, they do make some large departures from reality beyond the aspects of caricature mentioned previously. Although plays such as Hosanna and En pièces détachées do follow the more or less traditional structure of the linear plot in a realistic setting, others do not. Les Belles-soeurs, for example, contains chorus sections which are totally out of the realistic context of Germaine's kitchen. The women's recitation of their dreary routine stands out from the rest of the play and adds an air of "theatre" and of spectacle. Marie-Lou relies heavily on its theatrical set-up for its impact. In this play, the characters remain for the most part fixed to their particular stage areas without moving, and Tremblay uses two separate times and three locations simultaneously on the stage. He dexterously switches focus from one location to the other as the lines of the dialogue flash from one character to another. At one point, the lights change to indicate that all four characters are now situated in the same time.

This dislocated technique, finally uniting to form a comprehensible whole, produces an extremely dramatic effect. In Marie-Lou, as the final pieces of the puzzle are added to the picture of life with Marie-Lou and her family, the chilling moment arrives when the last piece must be laid down. Tremblay couples the final scene (Leopold asking Marie-Lou to come with him for a ride, which the audience knows is to be to their deaths) with the only moves either character makes during the whole play. Both stand up as the last line is delivered, creating a supreme theatrical moment.

Even the more or less linearly-structured of Tremblay's plays have their elements of theatricality which make experiencing a

performance of the plays all the more powerful. Hosanna, for instance, has the incredible Cleopatra costume which, as soon as the audience sees Hosanna wearing it, can captivate their attention. Beyond the reality of the characters in their life situations, and beyond the drabness of their surroundings, Tremblay introduces visual effects which logically fit in with the context of the play, but which stimulate the audience's senses and sensibilities beyond what would otherwise be expected. Les Belles-soeurs reveals another example in the character of Mme Dubuc, the old lady in the wheelchair. Although she fits in logically with her surroundings, she is treated like an inanimate object, a machine that doesn't function properly.

> THERÈSE
> Mme Dubuc, will you kindly let go of my saucer . . . There! Now you've done it, you've spilled it! That's the last straw!
>
> (She socks her mother-in-law on the head and the latter settles down a little.)
>
> GABRIELLE
> You don't fool around, do you? Aren't you afraid you'll hurt her?
>
> THERÈSE
> No, no, she's used to it. It's the only way to shut her up. My husband figured it out. If you give her a good bash on the head it seems to knock her out for a while. That way she stays in her corner and we get some peace.[11]

Mme Dubuc, apart from serving as an idea of dehumanized humanity, also serves as a theatrical device to carry the audience beyond the reality of the scene into a sort of absurdity, very reminiscent of techniques found in the plays of N.F. Simpson or Eugene Ionesco.

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11. Michel Tremblay, Les Belles-soeurs, trans. by John van Burek and Bill Glassco (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1974), p. 40.

Later, at the end of Les Belles-soeurs when all the characters begin singing O Canada as trading stamps rain down from the ceiling is another example of a move from strict reality into "theatricality." Once again the effect augments the attention of the audience towards the spectacle on the stage.

It is precisely this spectacle and theatricality combined with the other aspects of Tremblay's work already mentioned which move his appeal far beyond the boundaries of Quebec and carry his impact to the world at large. Certainly for Quebec, he has created a new stereotype of the Quebecois, and he has raised many valid questions concerning the nature of Quebecois society within the context of the Canadian union. Today, in 1977, francophone Quebec is taking a new pride in its language and its culture, in many ways as a direct result of Tremblay's unprecedented use of Joual and the new vision he has presented of the Quebecois. Spurred by Tremblay and other writers and artists who share his ideas, Quebec has begun to move rapidly to take stock of itself and to throw off many of the restrictions and encumbrances under which it has existed. But more than this, Tremblay has shown a timely vision of all humanity in its struggle to find new moral and philosophical bases. He has reflected the problems shared by all of Western society. His theatre is most definitely political, but the politics are far more outreaching than Bélair in his analysis of the new Quebec theatre would suggest. The themes of entrapment in old outmoded patterns of behaviour and escape from the bonds of unthinking convention are timely for a whole generation of people struggling, like the Quebecois, for their own sense of identity. Tremblay appeals to his audience not only with ideas of liberation, but with theatrical experiences of feelings, sight, and sound, to capture their attention and

interest, and he holds them enthralled with his very real presentations of people with problems that in many ways, everyone shares. His realism with its relentless barrage of the inequities and evils of contemporary life are coloured with compassion and pity. His love for the characters, and, by extension, for the audience, shines through in his delightful sense of humour.

For Quebec, Tremblay has created new stereotypes and new images of people in today's materialistic society, but his caricatures are in so many ways identifiable with those of society in general that their appeal is universal. Tremblay may think his voice is for French Quebec alone to hear, but he has been proven mistaken by the many successful productions of his plays outside Quebec.

DEMAIN MATIN MONTREAL M'ATTEND

Demain matin Montréal m'attend, with music for its nineteen songs composed by François Dompierre, and under the direction of André Brassard, was first produced at the Théâtre Maisonneuve of the Place des Arts in Montreal on March 16, 1972, and remains, of those plays written before 1976, the only major Tremblay play that has not yet been produced outside Quebec. Due undoubtedly to the cost and to the multitude of resources required to mount such a production, this play remains, as far as is known, untranslated until this version, Tomorrow Morning, Montreal!

For sheer magnitude, Demain matin is Tremblay's most outstanding play. With some thirty-five characters, not to mention a number of participants in a talent contest which precedes the main body of the play, Demain matin is a production of sizeable dimensions. For theatricality also it is unequalled by any of the other Tremblay plays. This play is structured around the model of a spectacular Broadway musical with song and dance routines by soloists alone and with chorus, which at times break entirely out of the context of the reality of the plot and become theatrical events on their own. The title song, sung by Louise, begins within the reality of the story but at once takes off with the chorus and turns into a music hall number with its own independent validity as a theatrical piece. The play's finale, Le Brésil brille, becomes a spectacular number with a Latin beat worthy of Carmen Miranda's most extravagant routines.

Tremblay presents these music-hall songs within their own natural background of the music-hall stage itself. These songs'

audiences are to be found as much on the stage with the characters in their situations as with the audience watching the play. Hello Baby and Won't You Dance the Charleston, Heston? are songs of this type, being performed for the entertainment of characters in the story. Some of the songs, however, do arise according to the conventions of many a Broadway musical. Betty Bird, for instance, tells a personal story through the song, Betty Bird's Lied, not to entertain her friends, but to tell them of her experiences. The framework of the stage within a stage makes these songs seem that much more comfortable in terms of the reality of the setting even though they may not fit in exactly with the reality of the plot.

However, to look at Demain matin merely in relation to the similarities with a Broadway musical is to do it a great disservice. It may follow the general format of a musical comedy, but at this point the resemblances become fewer. Demain matin is no middle-American-style family fare musical comedy. Musical it is, and comic, but the vision it reveals is typical of Michel Tremblay's work. This is no love story which ends happily ever after. In fact, it is not, except peripherally, a love story at all, but rather another of Tremblay's intense explorations of the theme of liberation and struggle for identity. The comedy in the play is not the usual situation variety of the traditional musical, but rather the comedy of wit, incongruity, outrage, and intellectual surprise that characterize the humour in other Tremblay works. Likewise, the characters are not the glossed-over wholesome stereotypes, the idealized heroes and heroines of musical romance, but rather the same characters of the Montreal east end and the underground night life who abound in Tremblay's other plays.

In Demain matin Montréal m'attend Tremblay takes the milieu

in which Carmen and Hosanna and the Duchess of Langeais exist, and he explores it to a greater extent than we find in the other plays. This is the milieu which, as Lola Lee, one of the main characters puts it, shows us "the other side of the coin," "l'autre côté de la médaille." However, the more conventional side of the coin, that of the grey, material, and crippling world of Germaine Lauzon and of Marie-Lou, finds a place as well in Demain matin. At the beginning of the play, Louise Tétrault, after winning a local T.V. talent contest, goes to tell her mother she is leaving the small village in which she has been brought up. In Louise's life up to now, the similarities between her environment at the Saint-Martin Bar-B-Cue where she works, and the world of the "smoke meat" restaurant in En pièces détachées are almost exact. As Louise puts it:

> Jeez, I'm sick and tired of having people bitching and complaining all around me, Mama. I'm just goddamn fed up with serving bar-b-cues and grilled steaks to Saint-Martin businessmen in the daytime and Saint-Martin bums at night!*

In Louise's confrontation with her mother we find that Mme Tétrault, too, suffers from much the same joyless existence with her drunken husband as does Marie-Lou with Leopold. In her song, La Chanson de la Mère Tétrault, she reveals some of the dreariness and isolation in her life:

> You play the martyr
> You tell yourself you're happy
> And that her father is still healthy and doing well.
> And you remain all alone!

Louise, like Carmen in Marie-Lou and Serge in Bonjour là, bonjour, wants out, and she thinks she will find her happiness in becoming a

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* This and all subsequent citations in English from Demain matin Montréal m'attend are taken from this translated version, Tomorrow Morning, Montreal!

cabaret singer in Montreal, something her older sister, Rita (Lola Lee), had done years before. Dressed in a blonde wig to "look like" her sister, she takes her newly-won trophy and, with stars in her eyes and visions of instant fame and happiness, sets out for the big city to imitate her older sister and win the same glory for herself.

The next scene finds Louise inside the Bolivar Lounge, the cabaret where Lola Lee performs her nightly revue, Lola Lee Lolo, with an unwilling and uncooperative cast of dancers. Tremblay takes a sort of "time out" from the story of Louise to introduce us to Lola and her co-performers. Immediately we see that Louise's dream is a sham. The glitter she expects is there, but it is only a veneer over something less than satisfying and worthwhile. Lola's first number, Dansez-vous le Charleston, Heston?, due to petty wrangling and misapplied talent, is as Tremblay explains, "a complete failure." This is not to say, however, that the number as part of the play is not entertaining in spite of this, but underneath the humour of this bungled torch song, we see the first glimpses of the decay underneath the brightness and dazzle of this life, this alternative to the monotony of existence in all the Saint-Martin-au-Large's of Quebec.

Lola Lee, née Rita Tétrault, has spent twelve years of her life making good her own escape from Saint-Martin and she is none too pleased with the prospect of having her little sister walk into her life and try to climb instantly into the niche of "success" she has spent so long carving for herself. Lola's discomfort turns to undisguised anger when she realizes that Louise's fantasy of success rests on the notion of imitating her own style, and perhaps doing it better than she does, herself.

LOUISE

Ah, Rita! Can't you see us together, singing the same song in the same dress . . . It'd be fun . . .

LOLA LEE

Yeah, I can just see it! And I don't find it fun at all! Listen, Baby, you're gonna catch the next bus right back to Saint-Martin and you're gonna go direct to your bar-b-cue, okay?

Louise has already revealed Lola's less-than-theatrical real name to the company and the image Lola has created is already beginning to disintegrate. She begins to see Louise as a dangerous threat to her own security and, realizing she cannot dissuade Louise from her course by mere remonstration, sets out to discourage her by showing her the real world that exists underneath the glittering surface of show-business life -- the other side of the coin. Louise, still clutching her trophy, which Tremblay states "will never leave her during the play," follows along, and the tour of underground Montreal begins.

At their first stop, the Meat Rack, we are introduced to the everyday, or perhaps more correctly, the every "night" world of Hosanna and La Duchesse de Langeais. The familiar characters of Hosanna and Cuirette and the Duchess herself make their appearance in this colourful and bizarre scene of transvestites and midnight cowboys. The characters here are, as Lola points out, the dancers that Louise thought were so sexy at the Bolivar Lounge, only here, they appear in their natural habitat. The first glimmerings of something-not-quite-right-in-the-land-of-show-biz become brilliant spotlights on warped personalities and corrupt morals as the characters of this scene pick at each other's identities. None of the patrons of the Meat Rack seems to place much value on personal esteem and each seems to take a perverse joy in hacking away at the others' very being. Bitchiness is a

way of life, and the atmosphere of the bar and the modus operandi of its patrons seem epitomized in the song, Bitch. Although the singers protest that at the same time they actually do love each other and adore each other, and that the only reason they bitch at and about each other is for their publicity, the actual truth seems more in line with the tone of the rest of the song:

DUCHESS
She plays the woman of the world and she doesn't have a clue how to
She has no more culture than the last woman on earth
She has an accent that's hard on your ears!
You can take the girl out of the east end but not the east end out of the girl!

The glee with which Marcel-Gérard, in this same song, flaunts his discovery of Lola Lee's real name, and the anger Lola expresses to her sister for revealing it belie the protests of love and affection these people maintain they feel for each other. Mimi-Pinson's comment, "A spoonful of Javex, a spoonful of honey, a spoonful of Javex, a spoonful of honey . . . " is not entirely true. The proportion of Javex is actually much greater than Mimi wants to believe.

Lola had thought that by showing Louise the homosexual side of the entertainment world she could dash her sister's ideas of glamourous affairs and great followings of men panting at her feet. In Du premier au dernier Lola gives vent to her bitterness and disappointment:

From the first to the last
From the blondest to the darkest
The more handsome they are, Louise, yes, the more handsome they are
The more you have to distrust them!

But Louise learns quickly. After her initial surprise, (culture shock, it might be more appropriately termed), she realizes that fitting into this show-business milieu will not be as difficult as it appeared

at the outset. She is frightened at first by the strangeness of the scene in which she finds herself, but in actually talking to these fearsome bitches of the night, she realizes that they are not as dreadful as first appearances would indicate. As she says to Lola:

> If you wanted to shock me and get me scared, all you had to do was bring me in here and out again. We've stayed too long, Rita. I've had time to find out that these people are just like anybody else . . .

Her conclusion to this observation is, "Sure, they scared me a little at first, but I'll get used to it. All I have to do is learn how to be a bitch too, Rita!" And so, Louise begins her journey of "escape" by persisting in her desire to be a star, and to do whatever is necessary to accomplish this goal. The sentiments expressed in the song, Faut entrer dans la danse, where the Meat Rack crowd convinces Louise that they are not as menacing as they seem, take on a double meaning. Louise is not going merely to join in the dance by accepting the humanity of people she has been taught to reject as less than human: she intends to join in the dance by taking on the same characteristics she sees in them. Her trophy, which comes to represent her single-mindedness in her escape from Saint-Martin and her illusions about stardom, is still clutched tightly in her hand.

Lola Lee, infuriated by the results of her efforts to get Louise out of her life, decides to show her yet another view of the underside of life in Montreal by taking her to Betty Bird's brothel, the place where she got her own start in show business. In Act II we are introduced to Betty Bird and her "staff" of versatile girls "who can even furnish moonlight" as part of the service. But here again the actual reality of the place belies the boasts of its employees. Betty's once-famous bordello is now a thread-bare affair of patched-up gowns

and jaded prostitutes. Violet, the newest member of the team, cannot understand why everyone uses the names of colours and flowers and is told, in chorus, by the rest of the staff:

> PURPLE
> . . . you've gotta tell yourself one thing: When that guy comes in the door there, you're better off calling yourself Violet than Jeannine. It doesn't hurt so much then.
>
> RAINBOW
> And when that load of Americans comes up in the summer you feel so much like merchandise that you're ashamed to call yourself Ginette . . .
>
> AVOCADO
> Or Claudette.
>
> ROSE
> Or Mariette.
>
> BUTCH
> Or Pierrette.

Once again we are shown another avenue of escape which is the same avenue taken by Pierrette in Les Belles-soeurs, and which has not lived up to expectations. Like so many other directions taken by Tremblay characters in their flight from the sordid east-end life of the belles-soeurs, this one also, has become a trap. Like Louise with her trophy, Violet is another initiate, and shrouded by her own ignorance and illusions she is headed for the same obliteration of the soul that Purple and the other prostitutes are approaching.

Louise, once again after some culture shock and subsequent readjustment, sees immediately the threat posed by this environment, and it is her unchanging determination to start at the top which keeps her from becoming caught as Lola Lee was. On being coerced by Lola, Betty Bird, presumably in order to scare Louise, offers her a job. Louise's response is that she may end up at Betty's, or some such place, but she intends to start somewhere else, higher up. Her reaction seems

to be one of dealing with such a situation only if necessary. Her mind is still firmly fixed on the idea of becoming a celebrity. But as the play nears its end, she realizes the falseness of the illusion she has for so long maintained about her sister. "If you wanted to disgust me with all your stories, you've succeeded! But it isn't what all you've showed me that disgusts me. It's you!" she says.

Driven to desperation to save her pre-eminent position, Lola finally reveals to Louise the real reasons why she is trying to get her to go home. She tells her of her real fear -- of being pushed back to where she started. "I had enough trouble to get on in the world, Louise," she says. "I've had enough trouble. And you're not gonna come and push me back down the hill!" Lola feelingly tells the true story of her struggle for success in the song, La Complainte de Lola Lee. Her anger reaches fever pitch as she pulls off Louise's wig and announces herself in the final number of her revue, Le Brésil brille. The reality of the scene in the brothel dissolves into the grand finale of the play, a Latin-beat music-hall number with "snake dances, flutes, confetti, etc." The plot remains unresolved. Louise, still firmly fixed on her original intention appears once again in the song "as a 'danced' struggle begins between the two sisters." Lola has failed to steer Louise from her course. All the glimpses of the cheap reality Louise has been shown have failed to bring her to the realization of the ultimate worthlessness of her goal. She has been seduced into the same trap in which all the other characters have been caught.

It is the humanity and essential likeability of all the supposed boogeymen placed by Lola in front of Louise which seduces Louise into joining in the dance. She may not have realized the ulti-

mate shallowness of wanting to be at the top of such a collection of people and attitudes, but she has realized the essential humanity of all of the people caught in this night-time scene. Louise may still be caught up in competing with her sister for top billing on the cabaret circuit, but she is able to do this with a great many of her preconceptions debunked. She has not yet achieved the state of awareness, for instance, of Serge in Bonjour là, bonjour, but she has advanced a long way from the notions and ideals embodied by her mother back in Saint-Martin, and by Germaine Lauzon in Les Belles-soeurs.

However, such philosophical considerations are not the complete vehicle which brings this play across to an audience. Demain matin, while presenting this view of a level of personal or political evolution, is not the serious existential exploration that the foregoing would suggest, for it is precisely this "humanity," that turned Louise's head, which operates to draw an audience into involvement with the play. The same love and compassion with which Tremblay treats the characters in his other plays is employed here not only as an aspect of the plot, but to bring the audience into sympathy with the characters. The average Canadian audience-member at the present time might feel very much the same as Louise on first confrontation with a Meat Rack full of transvestites and homosexuals, or a brothel full of prostitutes. These environments are discomfiting to most members of "normal" North American society. As happens in both Hosanna and La Duchesse de Langeais, the audience is drawn in to accepting the humanity of these characters who are traditionally viewed as sub-human. As Tremblay asks us to accept the validity of the struggle of Mother Tétrault, hopelessly lost in the straitjacket of her upbringing and her unaware

personality, he asks us to accept the validity and humanity of the Duchess of Langeais and Betty Bird and the other characters of the Montreal night-time scene. Far from being mere failures at escape-artistry, these characters are noble and tragic figures in exactly the same way as are Germaine Lauzon and Marie-Lou. Betty Bird, for instance, in Betty Bird's Lied, also reveals the tragedy of her own struggle with the circumstances of her life. Her pursuit of beauty and its attendant pleasures has led her to her present state, and she realizes that her star is waning. She has aspired all her life to being pursued by men, and now, in her decline, she sees the spiritual worthlessness of such a goal. Yet she cannot give up:

> Betty Bird's not dead
> Betty Bird's struggling
> She knows she's come down a long way
> But she has to get back up again.

These same sentiments are expressed by the formidable Duchess of Langeais in her lament:

> She's going to drag herself along the ground
> But when she's reached her limit,
> She's going to die on her feet
> Even if she's going to die alone and destitute!

The Duchess, too, realizes that ultimately her life has been a failure, but she is determined to keep her chin up to the last. Underneath her veneer of bitchy wit and often inconsequential banter is a person who has become aware, too late to act, perhaps, but nevertheless aware of a great many of the follies of life.

Tremblay seems to employ the Duchess as a sort of exposure of all follies by having her parody the images of Lola Lee and Betty Bird. She has, in fact, done what Louise sets out at the beginning to do, to imitate other people. Her appearance at Betty Bird's in a Betty

Bird costume seems to foreshadow Betty's decline much as the illusion she presents, dressed as Lola Lee, seems to presage Lola's theatrical demise. Yet the Duchess herself is a failure at her own game. No one listens to her anymore and she knows it. And yet, she cannot, she refuses, to give up the position she has wrested for herself from the hands of a society that denied her the very right to exist.

All these characters cry out to be understood, and all the major protagonists of the play have songs in which they explain why they are the way they are. The audience is led intellectually to understand their positions through the revelation of all these circumstances. The emotional sympathy, however, arises mainly through the romantic interests, much as it does in Tremblay's other plays.

The theme of love which never comes to full fruition pervades Demain matin and affords enough of a comfortable similarity to the romantic devices of the more traditional type of musical comedy to draw an audience's full and sympathetic attention, much as the love between Hosanna and Cuirette in Hosanna raises those characters to the stature of noble humans in need of compassion and understanding. All the major characters in Demain matin have had their tangles with Johnny, the seemingly archetypal inconstant lover. The romantic interests of the characters surface frequently in this play. Louise misses her Johnny-at-the-table-at-the-back. Lola Lee and Betty Bird have quarrelled over their Johnny. The Duchess has had her affairs with the "handsome men who were her downfall." Marcel-Gérard sings his song, Salut, about his ex-lover. Each of these failed romances strikes familiar notes for an audience, and they add an air of the ordinary, everyday human experience to the characters.

Tremblay displays his compassionate insight in Demain matin with his characteristic humour and wit, taking the bitter edge off the bitchiness by making us laugh. The seriousness of the underlying intent in the insults of the song, Bitch, for instance is toned down by their wit. The Duchess's line, "Tu peux sortir la fille de l'est, mais pas l'est d'la fille!" ("You can take the girl out of the east end but not the east end out of the girl.") lifts the song out of the realm of the serious, and as it rolls along, the viciousness dissipates into the comedy of the wit, music and dance.

And wit, music, and dance are, after all, at the root of this play. Demain matin Montréal m'attend is essentially an entertainment, encompassing much more than philosophical exploration and theatrical gimmicry. With Demain matin Michel Tremblay has presented his most elaborately-dressed theatrical package, revealing both Quebec society and a world-wide struggle for liberation in microcosm. A master of juxtaposition of the deadly serious with the most outrageous comedy, Tremblay has, in Demain matin, created a hybrid of his serious themes and bizarre humour with the romance and "shtick" of the musical comedy format. The result is as engaging and entertaining as it is shocking and outrageous. It has as much to say to any individual aspiring to escape from the restrictions of a stagnant society as it does specifically to the francophone citizen of Quebec. It is the hope of this translator that the appearance of the English version, Tomorrow Morning, Montreal!, will spur English-speaking producers to bring this play, virtually unknown outside of Quebec, to the attention of a wider theatrical audience.

TOMORROW MORNING, MONTREAL!: THE TRANSLATION

Up until recently, Joual, the dialect of French commonly spoken in Quebec, was considered to be bad French. In fact, the term, "joual," was generally considered as a "corrupted" form of "cheval." However, with the advent of Michel Tremblay, Les Belles-soeurs, and an increasing awareness of political and ethnic identity in Quebec, Joual has come to be considered a dialect or language valid in its own right. Sinclair Robinson and Donald Smith, the compilers of the Practical Handbook of Canadian French, share the view that Canadian French is as valid a mode of expression as any other language:

> Canadian French is lively, colourful and imaginative; it has the same capacity for expressing the whole range of human concerns as any other tongue. After suffering for many years the attacks of language purists who wish to change the speech of a community of six million people to bring it in line with that of another country, France, Canadian French has recently come into its own . . . [1]

The fact that Demain matin Montréal m'attend, with the exception of its stage directions, is written in Joual makes the translation of Michel Tremblay's plays something entirely unique. Previously, Quebec plays were written in Parisian-style French, and translating them was a much simpler matter of going from French to English, as the precepts and conventions of this process have been established for centuries. However, since Joual arrived on the scene in its written form in the works of Michel Tremblay, the translation of this hitherto unwritten language is in a much more "pioneer-like"

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1. Sinclair Robinson and Donald Smith, Practical Handbook of Canadian French (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1973), Introduction.

state.

Joual presents a unique problem to the translator in that it occupies a specific place in the speech of Quebec. French, of course, is the "official" language of Quebec, and most of the educated francophone population, indeed, does speak French. Joual, on the other hand, is the dialect spoken commonly in the streets, and is understood by virtually every native francophone Quebecois. Thus, the use of this common dialect in a play poses a contrast to the audience between its own dialect and the official language. The audience becomes aware of this discrepancy, and the resulting effect becomes part of the dramatic thrust of the play itself. Thus, a particularly colourful phrase in Joual can bring about a humourous reaction, for example, not necessarily because of any inherent humour in the words, but because the associations made between the dialect and the speaker of such a dialect give rise to humour.

An obvious example of this occurs near the beginning of Demain matin when Louise, on her arrival in Montreal, explains to Lola Lee, "D'abord, là y'en n'a pas d'étebus," ("In the first place, there isn't any bus.") Her use of the word, "étebus," a Joual version of "autobus," immediately marks her as a country hick. Later, Lola uses the same word, but this time to mock Louise: ". . . que tu vas poigner la première 'étebus' pour Saint-Martin," ("You're gonna take the first bus for Saint-Martin.") Thus, the contrast bewteen Joual and French gives rise to humour.

This effect does not translate into North American English because North American anglophone culture has no equivalent of such a dual-dialect language system. A closer analogy to the Joual - French

contrast might be the contrast between the English dialects spoken in some Caribbean countries, such as Jamaica, to Oxford English. The local dialects of English in North America are not different enough to cause such a contrast as they tend to differ merely in pronunciation rather than in actual vocabulary and grammar. Joual, on the other hand, differs to a much greater degree from French as it might be spoken in Paris.

However, this does not mean to say that translation from Joual to English cannot achieve some success. Some of the dramatic effect of Joual may be lost, but by following Michel Tremblay's own intentions concerning his own reasons for writing in Joual, one may perhaps arrive at a translated text which accomplishes many of the same results. Tremblay himself states, "I don't cling to joual as a principle. I use it because the vast majority of my people talk that way. When they start speaking differently, my characters will do the same. I want people to see themselves as they are . . . ."[2] It is the hope of this translator that this same objective, by using a language that the vast majority of Canadian anglophones employs, is met in the following version of Demain matin Montréal m'attend.

In Tomorrow Morning, Montreal! the dialogue is rendered in as colloquial a version of English as possible without lapsing into the dialect of a particular locale with western drawls, Newfoundland "r's," or the like. Since the play takes place in and around Montreal, a dialect which would tend to place the action in any other locale would be unsatisfactory. The English used in this translation reproduces a hybrid dialect, understandable, hopefully, to any Canadian

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2. Ben Shek, "French-Canadian Playwright Michel Tremblay," Performing Arts in Canada, VIII (Fall, 1971), p. 29.

speaker of English. Obviously, the disadvantage of this solution is that the dialect becomes somewhat bland and unrealistic in its lack of attachment to any specific locale. However, since the situation in this play, of a francophone locale with English speech, is unrealistic in any case, it was thought that this compromise was a fair one. The dialogue in this version reproduces as closely as possible a spoken English idiom. Some spellings have been changed and many words and phrases have been contracted in order to approximate spoken forms.

Unlike some other translations of Tremblay plays, that of Hosanna in particular, Tomorrow Morning, Montreal! does not depend on the use of French forms within the English text to enhance the "Quebecois" atmosphere of the play. With some few exceptions, the only words kept in their original form are the names of characters and places. For purposes of sonority in the songs, these should retain as close a resemblance as possible to their authentic Joual or French pronunciations. These names, plus a small number of other French expressions used only for purposes of dramatic effect or for sonority in the songs, are the only words which require any approximation of a French accent. The rest of the play is written to be reproduced either in unaccented English or by actors with French accents, whatever is expedient to a production. The "French-Canadian" atmosphere of the play, it is felt, stems from the subject and locale in which the play takes place and from the obviously French names of the characters. Further use of French for purposes of identification with the Quebec milieu, it was thought, would serve only to alienate an anglophone audience from the proceedings of the play.

This approach, however, has its problems, and the principal

one of these arises in the use of expletives, with which Joual is liberally and colourfully endowed. French-Canadian French has a unique lexicon of curse words which have no sensible equivalent in English. Much of Joual profanity finds its root in the use of church and religious symbolism, and with the exception of the name, Jesus Christ, itself, there are few ready translations into English. (Canadian English profanity is more fecally and sexually oriented.) However, it is not with the profanity alone that the Joual dialogue of Demain matin displays its air of commonness and vulgarity. The various Joual words and grammar themselves, as has been mentioned previously, give an effect to the dialogue, and this effect is one of vulgarity in the complete sense of the word. Since it cannot be reproduced exactly in English, this effect has to stem from some other source. In this version, curse words in English, equally vulgar in impact to those used commonly in Joual, are used both to replace the religiously oriented expressions of Joual cursing, and to add an air of crudity and vulgarity which is lost in the translation from Joual to English. Thus, in this example of one of Lola's lines, "Ah! pis protestez pas, c'est vrai!" ("Ah! Never mind arguing, it's true!"), additional crudity is given by rendering the line as "Jesus! Never mind arguing, it's true!"

This addition of vulgarities is tempered, however, according to the character who is to say them. Louise, for instance, uses a much milder vocabulary than does her more sophisticated and experienced sister, Lola Lee. Likewise, Violet, the inexperienced prostitute, is correspondingly naive in her speech in comparison with the other members of Betty Bird's staff.

The last, and probably the major problem of the translation of Demain matin arises in the translating of the songs. When music

is added to the text, the task of translating becomes much more complicated. Not only must the original meaning and effect of the lyrics be approximated in English, but the new lyrics must match the originals in rhythm and rhyme so that they will correspond to the music. After these factors are taken into account, there is a further consideration, that of "singability." Certain sounds in English, as indeed in any language, are more easily sung than others. Thus, care in translating the songs had to be taken to make sure that after all the other requirements were met, the resulting words could be sung easily on the notes that were assigned to them. The resulting songs, therefore, correspond to the originals in meaning to a much lesser degree than does the rest of the translated dialogue. In many cases, such as in the last stanza of Won't You Dance the Charleston, Heston?, where one line could be expressed in more than one way in English, and where neither way expresses the original idea fully, both translations are used. Here is the original version of two lines in the Charleston song:

> Mais y'a pus personne qui danse le Charleston, Heston
> Non, y'a pus personne qui danse le Charleston, Heston.

To adequately express the meaning, two different lines are used in the English version:

> But there's no one now to dance the Charleston, Heston,
> No one now knows how to dance the Charleston, Heston.

This method is employed in a number of places in the play. Two other outstanding examples are to be found in the songs, Lola Lee's Complaint and Brasilia Shines.

The songs for which music was available appear in a more literally translated form in the notes at the end of the play. Those for which no music was available appear in their literally translated forms within the text of the play.

At all times, this translator has attempted to reproduce the alliterative effects found both in dialogue and lyrics in the original text. An example of alliteration occurs near the beginning of Scene five when Candy-Baby says, ". . . on n'est pas venues ici pour se chiffonner le chignon." The translation retains the alliteration in the line, "We didn't come here to get our coiffures all crumpled!" In addition to this consideration, an attempt has been made to approximate, if not exactly duplicate, the effects of puns and expressions with humourous overtones. In some cases of course this was not possible. One such exception is the original title, Demain matin Montréal m'attend. Here a number of possible puns are made: Montréal m'attend is also Montréal m'atteint (touches me, wounds me) and Montréal-Matin (the name of a popular tabloid newspaper.)[3] In choosing the title for the English version, these considerations had to be abandoned.

Obviously, any translation of a work from one language to another has myriad limitations and shortcomings, all the more so when the work is a musical play which depends as much on the way in which the language is manipulated as on the actual meaning conveyed by the language. It is the hope of this translator that the following translation of Tomorrow Morning, Montreal! accurately conveys the impact of Michel Tremblay's original French text, and that wherever the translation is other than literal, the spirit has nevertheless been retained.

The text used in this translation is the Leméac, Collection Répertoire Québecois, edition of Demain matin Montréal m'attend, pub-

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3. cf. Laurent Mailhot, "Des missionnaires aux sauvages," Etudes Françaises, VIII (Nov., 1972), p. 425.

lished in 1972. The source of the music is the recording, Demain matin Montréal m'attend, produced by Les Disques Belles-soeurs and recorded at Brossard, Quebec. Some songs on the recording differ slightly from their printed versions in the Leméac text. The songs in Tomorrow Morning, Montreal! follow their recorded versions, not those of the printed text.

TOMORROW MORNING, MONTREAL!

by Michel Tremblay

A musical play in two acts translated by
William A. Ives

CAST OF CHARACTERS

LOLA LEE, a star nightclub entertainer in Montreal.

LOUISE TETAULT, Lola Lee's sister, a waitress from the village of Saint-Martin-au-Large.

BETTY BIRD, the "Madam" of a Montreal brothel.

PURPLE, a prostitute, a senior member of Betty Bird's "staff."

MARCEL-GERARD, a newspaper columnist and a regular patron of the Meat Rack, a bar catering to homosexual clientele.

THE DUCHESS OF LANGEAIS, an aging, overweight drag queen who entertains at the Meat Rack.

CANDY-BABY, a transvestite patron of the Meat Rack, also a member of Betty Bird's staff.

HOSANNA, a transvestite patron of the Meat Rack.

BABALU, a transvestite patron of the Meat Rack.

MONA LISA, a transvestite patron of the Meat Rack.

MARINE, a transvestite patron of the Meat Rack.

BRIGITTE, a transvestite patron of the Meat Rack.

BUTCH, a lesbian patron of the Meat Rack, also on "staff" at Betty Bird's.

MIMI-PINSON, owner and M.C. of the Meat Rack.

HESTON, a dancer in Lola Lee's revue.

SLIM, a Meat Rack patron.

CUIRETTE, a Meat Rack patron.

COWBOY, a Meat Rack patron.

TOPAZE, a prostitute at Betty Bird's.

SANDY, a prostitute at Betty Bird's.

ROSY, a prostitute at Betty Bird's.

CREAM, a prostitute at Betty Bird's.

AVOCADO, a prostitute at Betty Bird's.

SCARLET, a prostitute at Betty Bird's.

RAINBOW, a prostitute at Betty Bird's.

VIOLET, a prostitute, the youngest member of Betty Bird's staff.

MOTHER TETRAULT, mother of Louise and Lola Lee.

LOLA LEE'S DRESSER

FIRST BOY, a waiter.

SECOND BOY, a waiter.

FIRST GIRL, a waitress.

SECOND GIRL, a waitress.

DANCERS

LIST OF SONGS

1. TOMORROW MORNING, MONTREAL!* ..... Louise and Chorus
2. AIR ..... Louise
3. MOTHER TETRAULT'S SONG ..... Mother
4. WON'T YOU DANCE THE CHARLESTON, HESTON?* ..... Lola Lee
5. MERCI LUCILLE* ..... Louise
6. MEATRACK WALTZ ..... Duchess of Langeais and Chorus
7. FROM THE FIRST TO THE LAST* ..... Lola Lee and Chorus
8. BITCH* ..... Lola Lee, Duchess of Langeais, and Marcel-Gérard
9. WHEN IT'S COLD OUTSIDE ..... Les Quatre Barbuses
10. YOU'VE GOT TO JOIN IN THE DANCE ..... Louise and Boys
11. THE DUCHESS'S LAMENT ..... Duchess of Langeais
12. WELCOME TO MISS BETTY BIRD'S* ..... Purple and Girls
13. HELLO BABY ..... Betty Bird and Girls
14. WHEN THE CLICKERS CLICK ..... Lola Lee
15. SALUT ..... Marcel-Gérard and Louise
16. JOHNNY-FROM-THE-TABLE-AT-THE-BACK ..... Louise
17. BETTY BIRD'S LIED* ..... Betty Bird
18. LOLA LEE'S COMPLAINT* ..... Lola Lee
19. BRASILIA SHINES* ..... Everybody

* indicates songs which have been adapted in order to be sung with the music from the recording, Demain matin Montreal m'attend on Les Disques Belles-soeurs. More literal translations of these songs appear in the notes at the end of the play.

The play is set in the present. The settings are:

ACT I.

Scene 1. On the stage of an amateur talent contest outside of Montreal.

Scene 2. At the end of the talent contest and shortly after.

Scène 3. At Louise's home, shortly after the contest.

Scene 4. At the Bolivar Lounge, where Lola Lee performs, later that same night.

Scene 5. Later the same night at the Meat Rack, a nightclub catering to homosexual clientele.

Scene 6. Still later the same night, in the Duchess of Langeais' dressing room at the Meat Rack.

ACT II.

Scene 1. Later, in the small hours of the following morning, at Betty Bird's, a once-prosperous Montreal brothel.

ACT I

Scene 1

In the middle of the empty stage a hideous trophy sits enshrined. LOUISE and the CHORUS, dressed as waiters and waitresses, enter slowly and begin rehearsing all sorts of music-hall numbers (song, dance, etc.). When the house lights go down, the grande finale of the amateur contest begins. LOUISE sings Brasilia Shines more or less adequately; two duettists massacre Marinella; a tap dancer trips and falls; a romantic singer goes off key in Un Certain sourire; a small chorus "executes" a South American rhythm, Impossible; a singer with a strong voice loses it in Le Chant du désert; a western-style singer misses her yodels; two more-sophisticated dancers quarrel verbally with each other while dancing; an opera singer succeeds with the yodels of the western singer; etc.; etc.

Scene 2

VOICE OF M.C.

Ladies and gentlemen[1], the moment you've all been waiting for has now arrived, the moment when we will reveal the name of the winner[2] of our Lucille Dumont trophy for this year. All throughout this season you have seen before you the most promising talents of our belle province in the world of music hall and song. After long secret meetings, at least this is what they tell us, the members of our distinguished jury have decided to award the prize this year to a talented young singer from Saint-Martin-au-Large , . . The winner is Miss Louise Tétrault!

(Spotlight on LOUISE who remains frozen for a moment, then begins to shout.)

LOUISE

It's me! It's me! I won! I won the Lucille Dumont trophy!

(She throws herself on the trophy.)

I knew it! I knew I was just as good as any singer! With this trophy now I can go to Montreal! To Montreal!

(Some of the CHORUS members approach LOUISE.)

FIRST BOY

So you're going to Montreal, Louise?

LOUISE

Yes . . .

SECOND BOY

For a long time!

LOUISE

Forever!

SECOND BOY

What're you gonna[3] do there? Is the Saint-Martin Bar-B-Cue opening a branch in Montreal?

LOUISE

I'm gonna sing!

CHORUS

What?

LOUISE

You didn't see the special on TV just now? I won the Lucille Dumont trophy! I told you I was good! And so, tomorrow I'm going to Montreal!

FIRST GIRL

She's gettin' a swelled head awful damn quick, eh?

SECOND GIRL
I s'pose you're gonna be a star. Bang, just like that, eh?[4]

LOUISE
Yes. My sister's gonna help me . . .

FIRST BOY
Your sister? You sister's just gonna stomp on you, Louise!

LOUISE
My sister's at the top!

FIRST BOY
In your little head, yeah . . .

LOUISE
She has all of Montreal at her feet, and she's gonna help me get up there with her.

FIRST GIRL
I: you think it's so easy . . .

FIRST BOY
You know what your sister had to go through before she got to where she is now?

SECOND GIRL
Ah, leave her alone. If she wants to fall on her ass,[5] that's her business.

SONG: TOMORROW MORNING, MONTREAL![6]

LOUISE
In the morning I'll make my start and
I'll answer to the city's call.
Farewell and good-bye to Saint-Martin,
Tomorrow morning, Montreal!
En ville! En ville!

CHORUS
You'll go for rides on le métro,
You'll buy your clothes at Le Château,
You'll stroll down Plaza St. Hubert,
Saint Catherine Street, and everywhere,
You'll go out dining at the Pam Pam,
Visiting the church of Notre Dame,
You'll meet all the stars and never
Think of hick-town channel seven!

LOUISE
In the morning I'll make my start and
I'll answer to the city's call.
Farewell and good-bye to Saint-Martin,
Tomorrow morning, Montreal!
En ville! En ville!

CHORUS

You'll be received by Mayor Drapeau!
You'll be on big-time channel ten!
You'll cut hit records now and then
Be cover girl for Péladeau!

LOUISE

I'll arrive there with my trophy
Everyone'll fall at my feet
I'm gonna be a star for sure
Surrounded by young fags and furs!

LOUISE and CHORUS

In the morning I'll make my start and
I'll answer to the city's call.
Farewell and good-bye to Saint-Martin,
Tomorrow morning, Montreal!
En ville! En ville!

LOUISE

You'll never see me here again
This little waitress wants a change
She'll become a legend and
She'll be the talk of Saint-Martin!

LOUISE and CHORUS

In the morning I'll make my start and
I'll answer to the city's call.
Farewell and good-bye to Saint-Martin,
Tomorrow morning, Montreal!
En ville! En ville!

LOUISE

Oh Jeez! Even tomorrow morning's too late. I think I'll go right now. Tonight!

Scene 3

MOTHER, whom we have sensed prowling around since the beginning of the song, appears in a spotlight.

MOTHER

Louise!

(LOUISE stops abruptly.)

LOUISE

What's the matter?

MOTHER

What the hell's all that racket? Where are you going like that?[7]

LOUISE

I'm going.

MOTHER

I know you're going, dummy! I can see that. I'm asking you WHERE you're going!

LOUISE (softly)

Why the hell do you care?

MOTHER

I want to have something to say when your father comes home!

LOUISE

He'll be so drunk he won't ask you any questions!

MOTHER

I want to know what to tell him if he does ask me. Do you hear me?

LOUISE (to herself)

You'll know what to say. You're a big enough liar!

MOTHER

You're going out to meet Johnny, eh?

LOUISE (surprised)

Johnny? (Pause) Johnny? Uh uh. I'm not going out to meet Johnny. I'm going to Montreal . . .

MOTHER

At this hour? There's no return bus! You won't be able to get back 'til tomorrow . . .

LOUISE

In the first place, I'm not planning to come back tonight. I'm not planning to come back at all . . .

MOTHER

Ah! I get it! You're running away . . . Like the other one . . .

LOUISE

Yes, Mama. I'm running away . . .

MOTHER

Just like that? Without a suitcase, or anything? Without anything to wear?[8]

LOUISE

I'll get my clothes sent when I'm settled.

MOTHER

At least your sister took her suitcase! And, she fixed it so's I wouldn't see her leaving! Just found her empty room the next morning. And a letter . . .

LOUISE

Don't start in on that story again, Mama! You've been telling that one to the world at least ten times a day for the last twelve years! Besides, I'm giving you another story to tell. You should be happy . . .

MOTHER

What'll happen to us, to me and your father?

LOUISE

You'll go on doing what you started fifty years ago . . . You'll just go on complaining, and you won't do anything about it right up to your last dying breath! You don't need me to do that. Jeez, I'm sick and tired of having people bitching and complaining all around me, Mama. I'm just goddamn fed up with serving bar-b-cues and grilled steaks to Saint-Martin businessmen in the daytime and Saint-Martin bums at night!

SONG: AIR

LOUISE

Air! Air! Air!
Give me air!
Even if it's polluted!
The clean air of Saint-Martin
The clean streets of Saint-Martin
The clean world of Saint-Martin
I don't want to hear any more about it!
I don't give a damn!

If you have to be dirty to live,
I'll live dirty, Mama, I'll live dirty!
I don't give a damn!
If you have to be dirty to live,
I'll live dirty, Mama, I'll live dirty!

Air! Air! Air!
Give me air!

Even if it's polluted!
The dirty air of Montreal
The dirty streets of Montreal
That's what I want to get to know!
And I'm going there!
I don't give a damn!
If you have to be dirty to live
I'll live dirty, Mama, I'll live dirty!
I don't give a damn!
If you have to be dirty to live
I'll live dirty, Mama, I'll live dirty!
Air! Air! Air!
Give me air even if it's poisoned!

LOUISE
I'm gonna go and live with Rita in Montreal, Mama. I can't stand living in Saint-Martin any more! I'm gonna try to . . . to get work there.

MOTHER
Do you think it'll be more fun selling bar-b-cued chicken in Montreal than in Saint-Martin?

LOUISE (showing her the trophy)
I'm not gonna be selling bar-b-cued chicken, Mama. Look . . .

MOTHER (maliciously)
What's that? Did you win it at bowling?

(LOUISE glowers at her for a few seconds, then moves away.)

MOTHER
All right, get the hell out! But whatever happens don't come crying home at the end of two months like the other one. It wasn't long before your sister came crawling back, you know . . . It wasn't all that beautiful in Montreal after all. She thought I'd help her back up, that I'd pull her up out of her muck! Well let me tell you, she stayed there, in her muck. It's been twelve years since she left. She's come back twelve times . . . Once each year. And when she comes home, it's always to ask me for "services." And these "services," these "services" are always money in three figures. And I just harden myself and turn my back on her every time! "Got any cash, Mom?" "Yeah, I've got some, but you aren't gettin' one cent! You wanted to leave, my precious little girl, so you can get out of your shit by yourself! I didn't bring you up so you could be a goddamn whore!"

(LOUISE turns abruptly towards her mother.)

MOTHER
Everything I've told you about Rita is true, Louise!

(LOUISE goes out, running.)

SONG: MOTHER TETRAULT'S SONG

MOTHER

Each time the doorbell goes
Whether it's early in the morning
Or even if it's late at night
Fat old Mother Tétrault gets up!
Is it Rita? Dead?
Madame it's your little doll,
They finally got her
And it was time for her to get it.

That's what you're afraid of!
And that's what's gonna happen!
That's what you're afraid of!
And that's what's gonna happen!

When you raise just two
And one of them leaves,
You want to smother the other one
So she won't go away!

But at night when it rains
And the other one's late!
You tell yourself it's all your fault
And she'll never come back!

That's what you're afraid of!
And that's what's gonna happen!
That's what you're afraid of!
And that's what's gonna happen!

But if she comes back once in a while
Even if you miss her,
You're much too proud
To take her in your arms.
You lift up your arms like you're being crucified
You play the martyr
You tell yourself you're happy
And that her father is still healthy and doing well!
And you remain all alone!
And you wait!
You wait for the doorbell to ring!
Each time the doorbell goes
Whether it's early in the morning
Or even if it's late at night,
Fat old Mother Tétrault gets up!

Scene 4

The Bolivar Lounge.

LOLA LEE, draped in a huge "dramatic" cape, and her dancers enter and place themselves for the Charleston number (the final number in the revue, Lola Lee Lolo.) The dancers look completely disgusted and are visibly making fun of the choreography. LOLA LEE seems exasperated.

LOLA LEE

And don't forget to smile, eh? Ear to ear grins! That gang of assholes[9] out there in the house are paying to see us do our little steps and smile. That means step, and smile!

DANCERS

Yeah, okay. Yeah, okay.

LOLA LEE

Will you stop saying "Yeah, okay, yeah, okay?" And DO it!

VOICE OF M.C.

And now the star of our show, the astounding Lola Lee, in the final number of her revue, Lola Lee Lolo.

LOLA LEE

And if I see one person who isn't smiling, I'll split his face open from one side to the other!

(As soon as the song begins, the dancers ignore everything LOLA LEE has just told them and she is forced to tell them off during the number when she has her back turned to the public . . . In short, a complete failure.)

SONG: WON'T YOU DANCE THE CHARLESTON, HESTON?[10]

LOLA LEE

He sat propped at the bar, eyes open wide,
Drinking a whisky sour, milk on the side,
I pulled up my gloves, and walked up to him,
I reached my hands out, touching his chin,
And then I did what I do best,

I put his head between my breasts,
And I said:

Won't you dance the Charleston, Heston?
C'mon and dance the Charleston, Heston!
If you won't dance the Charleston, Heston,
Lola Lee, the gloved tigress, is one
Washed up, finished, dead bum! Heston!

Whether they're named Nestor or Heston,
Donald or James, Richard or Burton,
Roger or John, or even Gilles,
They all insist I'm over the hill . . .
Then I show them what I do best,
I put their heads between my breasts . . .

But there's no one now to dance the Charleston, Heston,
No one now knows how to dance the Charleston, Heston,
If you won't dance the Charleston, Heston,
Lola Lee, the gloved tigress, is one . . .

(HESTON comes up. He slaps a rose into her mouth.)

LOLA LEE (with the rose in her mouth)
But Heston, you know I don't dance the tango!

(After the number, the whole troupe remains on stage.

LOLA'S DRESSER enters to bring her a towel, a robe, and

cigarettes.)

LOLA LEE
Come on, come on, hurry . . . I've never needed a cigarette so bad. Maybe it'll calm me down a bit. My nerves are all standing on end. You, get a move on too, the rest of you. I don't want this get-together to go on for two hours either.

DRESSER
It was pretty good tonight.

LOLA LEE
Don't twist the knife in the wound, eh? They were all acting like jack-in-the-boxes with broken springs. Pépinot and Capucinell were better than that in their day!

DRESSER
Well, I thought it was okay. Anyway you did real good, Madame Lee . . .

LOLA LEE
Me, of course. When I'M on a stage, I give everything I've got. I came into music hall 'cause I had talent, not just to flash my rear at everybody. How come they're not all here yet?

(A GIRL enters.)

LOLA LEE

Ah, finally. It's about time!

GIRL

Sorry, I had to go make a phone call.

LOLA LEE

Don't tell us about your private life, girl, we know it all by heart! I asked you to stay on stage after the show tonight because I've got something very important to say to you. You must have noticed that the revue has started to fall apart in the last few days . . .

(Protest)

LOLA LEE

Jesus! Never mind arguing, it's true!

BOY

If she didn't steal so much from us, maybe we'd put a little more heart into our work!

LOLA LEE

You shut your trap, Nureyev! Especially you! You nearly tripped me again in Subo Subo tonight! You think I like dancing for two people? I've gotta work up a new choreography[12] every night so I don't have you under my feet! You got a choreography, so follow it! No more of those cute little steps to please your boy-friends out in the house!

BOY

Or my girl-friends . . .

LOLA LEE

Oh no no, I said "your boy-friends" and that's what I meant. Never mind trying to pass for straight, Ti-Guy. Starting tomorrow I want this show done like it was choreographed three months ago!

GIRL

I don't even remember it!

LOLA LEE

Yeah, well I remember it! Rehearsal tomorrow at two o'clock!

(Loud protestations.)

(LOUISE has entered. She has put on a blonde wig in order to "look like" her sister. She is holding a suitcase in one hand and her trophy in the other. The trophy will never leave her during the play.)

BOY

Ah, c'mon, now you're going a bit too far!

LOLA LEE

I never gave you permission to talk to me like that, birdbrain.[13]

BOY

Well, I'm doing it anyway. We've practised a whole month for this "show" and that's enough! But if you want us to rehearse more, then pay us. I don't give a shit whether I dance or do something else. I just don't want to dance for free!

LOLA LEE

Ah that's it. Money! Always money![14] You'd think the whole lot of you were only in this business to make a buck!

GIRL

Well, why not?

LOLA LEE

At your age, you know, at your age I was making ten times less than you and I was working ten times harder!

BOY

There's the old broken record starting up again!

LOLA LEE

And I did my shows properly!

GIRL

Well, we weren't around to see it.

LOLA LEE

I certainly did do them properly. My first job wasn't at the Bolivar Lounge, you know, and I didn't have a Lola Lee to protect me. No, I started at the bottom of a pit!

BOY

And you're gonna finish in a pit! Everybody knows it . . .

LOLA LEE

Would you care to repeat that, Alice!

(The BOY takes refuge behind one of the female dancers.)

LOLA LEE

Yeah, sure! And to top it all, he goes and hides behind a woman! Start by getting some experience, and then you can demand to be paid!

GIRL

Right. Die of starvation all your life, baby, then at forty you can start getting paid what you should've got when you were twenty! No thank-you! I want money and I want it now! Experience can come later!

LOLA LEE

Yeah? Well I've got news for you, Rosa! You're gonna come and practise tomorrow and you're not getting one cent more, got it? Dance it right, goddamn it, and there won't be any argument. And anyway, Gerda, you can come and see me in five years and we'll see where you are.

GIRL

Don't worry yourself for me, "Gerda!" In five years you're gonna be finished and it'll be me that'll take your place! This isn't the 1950's. It's not gonna take me twenty years to get somewhere! I know how to do it!

LOLA LEE

You watch what you say, girl, if you don't wanta lose a job in one big hurry . . . Your "career" could end a lot sooner than you think . . . She's got no more talent than a block of wood and she carries on like Mistinguett.[15]

GIRL

Who?

LOLA LEE

A Hawaiian dancer in the time of Louis XIV! And ignorant to boot! Do you even know what a dance instructor is?

GIRL

I've danced here often enough, every goddamned night. If you think I'm gonna start taking courses on top of that!

LOLA LEE

Ah! It doesn't do any good to try to convince you, you're all so pig-headed. I'll see you tomorrow afternoon. Don't forget, eh? Two o'clock. If you're too stupid to listen to me, then that's too bad!

(She heads towards the exit and sees LOUISE.)

LOUISE

Hi!

LOLA LEE (surprised)

Louise!

(After a few seconds she runs toward her sister and takes her in her arms.)

LOLA LEE

Louise! My little sister! I didn't recognize you with your blonde wig!

LOUISE

It looks like a wig?

LOLA LEE

Well . . . uh . . . no, when we're used to seeing you with dark hair, it . . . it looks different!

LOUISE

Do you like it?

LOLA LEE

Well . . . it's . . . different . . . How are you, anyway?

LOUISE

Oh I'm fine . . . I'm fine . . .

LOLA LEE

What're you doing in Montreal? (Laughing) Are you going to try your luck in the bar-b-cue here?

(LOUISE doesn't laugh.)

LOUISE

No. I'm here to sing.

LOLA LEE

What?

LOUISE

Well, yeah . . . I'm here to try my luck at singing . . . Like you! Look. I won the Lucille Dumont trophy!

LOLA LEE

The Lucille Dumont trophy? What's that?

LOUISE

You've never heard of it in Montreal?

LOLA LEE

Well . . . No.

LOUISE

Oh, that's too bad, It's just like the one you won at home. You know . . . What was the name?

LOLA LEE

Oh yes. The Simonne Quesnel talent contest.

DRESSER

You won the Simonne Quesnel talent contest? Me too. Have you been in Montreal that long? How old are you then, Madame Lee?

LOUISE

Well, I'm twenty-two. That makes her . . .

LOLA LEE

So you just came here to sing in Montreal, just like that? You never told me you sang . . . You sneaky little . . .[16]

LOUISE

I'm gonna be a big star, Rita!

(The DANCERS laugh.)

LOLA LEE
Don't you ever call me Rita here!

LOUISE
Oh, sorry. I'm gonna be a big star, Lola!

LOLA LEE
Well, if you won a trophy, that must mean you have some talent . . .

(Mockeries.)

GIRL
I won a trophy, too, but let me tell you, I didn't get it using my voice!

LOLA LEE
Seems to me I already told you I've seen enough of you . . . Don't forget, eh? Tomorrow, two o'clock.

(The DANCERS leave.)

DANCERS
G'night, Rita Lee.

FEMALE DANCER
Good thing they didn't call her Sara!

LOLA LEE
Well, how's everybody at home?

LOUISE
Oh, you know. They're still the same. Just a little bit older. But I'll tell you they're not getting any better as they get older. I'd even say they're getting worse.

LOLA LEE
Has Mama still got it in for me?

LOUISE (after some hesitation)
I don't know. But I don't think so, no I don't think so. Anyway, she never talks about it . . .

LOLA LEE
She never says anything against me?

LOUISE
No, she never even talks about you.

(Embarrassed silence.)

LOUISE
Are you gonna be able to help me?

LOLA LEE

Help you?

LOUISE

Yes. Well, help me find a job . . .

LOLA LEE

Oh, sure . . . I can maybe get you into the Marakech.[17] They're looking for girls right now. It's kind of a pit, though. Anyway, I can ask Maurice at the Coconut Inn. I think he wants to change all his chorus girls.

LOUISE

I don't want to be a chorus girl. I want to start singing on my own right away!

LOLA LEE

C'mon now, Louise! Montreal isn't a village you know! You don't get to be a star just like that, the first day! It took me ten years!

LOUISE

But I'm your sister . . . We could get a lot of publicity from that. If you put me in your show, we could sing together!

LOLA LEE

Well, as for that . . . Maybe we could get a bit of publicity out of it . . . I'm telling you, the way things are going now, a bit of publicity wouldn't hurt. What do you sing? Those great big heavy things, I suppose. Mon Credo style . . . A Quebecois Mireille Mathieu?[18]

LOUISE

No! No! I sing the same things you do! It'll be easy! I'll sing exactly, exactly like you!

LOLA LEE

What?

LOUISE

Well, sure, I won my trophy singing like you in Brasilia Shines! You remember it, in your last show you were all dressed up in ruffles and frills and flying around the stage singing "Brazil is screaming, Brasilia, Brasilia shines . . . "

LOLA LEE

Are you crazy? You can't make a career imitating me!

LOUISE

Well, why not? There's lots of sisters who sing.

LOLA LEE

Sure, but we're not the Reno sisters,[19] for God's sake.

LOUISE

Ah, Rita! Can't you see us together, singing the same song in the same dress . . . It'd be fun . . .

LOLA LEE

Yeah, I can just see it! And I don't find it fun at all! Listen, Baby, you're gonna catch the next bus right back to Saint-Martin and you're gonna go direct to your bar-b-cue, okay?

LOUISE

I don't think so.

LOLA LEE

There's no either this or that!

LOUISE

First of all, there isn't any bus!

LOLA LEE

Oh, so that's it! You thought I'd keep you here, eh, you little bitch[20] . . . Don't you think I've got other things to do than look after you . . . You can come and sleep at my place tonight if you want. But I'm telling you right now your career as a mimic has just ended!

LOUISE

I want to stay in Montreal. I've got the right to get my chance to get started too.

LOLA LEE

If you knew what Montreal was, you wouldn't be calling it a chance, Baby. You haven't been here for a long time, have you?

LOUISE

I never come. Daddy doesn't like it. I only came a few times with him to see your shows . . .

LOLA LEE

You don't know the cabarets and the night-club life and all that, do you?

LOUISE

No, but it won't be long before I do know them.

LOLA LEE

Maybe you need to be shown a bit of what it's like right now!

LOUISE

But everything's closed now isn't it? All the cabaret shows are over!

LOLA LEE

The shows are only one side of the coin, Louise! I s'pose you're dumb enough to think everybody goes to bed when they're through here?

LOUISE

Well, if there isn't anything else to do . . .

LOLA LEE

The dancers you saw a while ago, what did you think of them?

LOUISE
The dancers? I didn't get a good look at them, but they seemed to be pretty good-looking. Kinda sexy, anyway.

LOLA LEE
You know where they go when they leave the cabaret?

LOUISE
Uh . . . no.

LOLA LEE
Would you like me to show you where they go?

LOUISE
Well, I don't know . . .

LOLA LEE
Good, wait here while I go change, then I'll show it all to you . . . I'm taking you out tonight!

LOUISE
Oh thank-you, Rita . . . uh . . . Lola. That's real nice of you.[21]

LOLA LEE
I'm gonna show you the other side of the coin, now.

LOUISE
That's real kind of you, Lola.

LOLA LEE
I'm gonna turn you off Montreal so fast, you little bitch,[22] you're gonna catch the first bus for Saint-Martin tomorrow morning!

(She goes out.)

(The DRESSER has remained on the set. She approaches LOUISE.)

LOUISE
Boy! It's sure big inside here, when it's empty.

DRESSER
When it's full too. I've seen it much fuller than it was tonight, you know.

LOUISE
Is it Lola's, all this?

DRESSER
Well, let's say . . .

LOUISE
Some day it's all gonna be mine. Are the microphones working?

DRESSER

Oh . . . yes.

LOUISE

I'd like to try one. If I'm gonna be working here, eh?

DRESSER

I'd love to hear you . . .

LOUISE

But I don't know what to sing, though.

(DRESSER shows her her trophy.)

LOUISE

Yeah! Maybe I'll say thank-you to Lucille.

SONG: MERCI LUCILLE[23]

LOUISE

Merci Lucille! Merci Lucille!
Thank-you for giving me my chance,
And from now on there's a new me . . .
Louise Tétrault's gonna be . . . Lyla Jasmin!

Lyla Jasmin! Lyla Jasmin!
It seems a lifetime I've been wanting
To see my name in Montréal-Matin[24]
Announcing me at Club Renaissance.

Lyla Jasmin! Lyla Jasmin!
It seems a lifetime I've been sighing,
Yes, all my lifetime I've been dying
For my big chance to sing in the "Quartier Latin."

Merci Lucille! Merci Lucille!
Thank-you for giving me my chance,
And from now on there's a new me . . .
Louise Tétrault's gonna be . . . Lyla Jasmin!

Tomorrow everyone'll say "Hello!"
You'll see my name in all the papers!
Another Gaétane Létourneau![25]
Hey look at her! Hey I think I see her!
The biggest star now in Montreal,
With her own show she's the latest craze,
A new Muriel[26], but that's not all,
A vamp with wicked, wicked ways . . .
Always the most discerning men
Throwing her camelias, orchids, roses!
On her all Music Hall reposes!
I'm the biggest!
I'm the best!
The reigning queen of Music Hall!

Merci Lucille! Merci Lucille!
Thank-you for giving me my chance,
And from now on there's a new me . . .
Louise Tétrault's gonna be . . . Lyla Jasmin!
Merci Lucille!

(LOLA enters while LOUISE sings.)

LOLA LEE

Are you coming, Lyla Jasmin?

Scene 5

The Meat Rack, a "specialized" bar in Montreal. The ten TRANSVESTITES[27] enter to the sound of jungle music, distribute themselves around the bar and assume statuesque poses.

MONA LISA

My girdle is killing me!

CANDY-BABY

It's my shoes that're killing me. Think I'll take them off.

MARCEL-GERARD

This silly idea of yours to wear pointed shoes from 1960! Antique!

CANDY-BABY

I told you, Marcel-Gérard, the late fifties was the peak of fashion.

HOSANNA

Sure, if you like parachutes. Did you wash your crinoline in sugar and corn-starch last night, Candy? Does it scratch your legs like it's s'posed to, right there?

CANDY-BABY

Bitch!

MARCEL-GERARD

Look who's talking! Rose-Anna, with her imitation of a synthetic Cleopatra, reconstituted.

HOSANNA

My name isn't Rose-Anna, it's Hosanna!

MARCEL-GERARD

Well, that's a new one, isn't it? Now you've turned into a Jewess? Two weeks ago you were still calling yourself Rose-Anna, like a nice little French-Canadian girl.[28]

MONA LISA

That's cause she tricked out with an old Jew and he had her screaming "Hosanna in the highest!"

HOSANNA

Bitch!

BUTCH

Yeah, whad'ya want?

HOSANNA

I didn't say Butch, I said Bitch!

BRIGITTE

It's the same thing, anyway.

BUTCH

You want a karate chop in the head? Eh?

COWBOY

Lay a hand on Brigitte, little tough-guy, and you'll get it right after.

BRIGITTE

Thanks, Cowboy. I'll pay you back for that.

MARINE

In trade . . .

BRIGITTE

Why not?

MARINE

Aren't you afraid of getting bugs, Cowboy? Brigitte specializes in crabs, you know!

BRIGITTE

Marine! I'm not gonna let you . . .

COWBOY

Is that true?

CUIRETTE (scratching)

Yes!

BRIGITTE

Bitch!

CUIRETTE

Don't come any closer to Brigitte than ten feet, Cowboy, or it'll cost you a fortune in Kwellada.[29]

SLIM

You're all such vulgar people!

MONA LISA

Well, the Parisienne deigns to open her mouth . . . Before she opens the rest! Usually it's the other way around . . . Isn't it, Slim? And another thing, I don't know why you keep that name . . . As well as not being especially slim since your trip to Paris, you're not even male anymore! Better get another name, Slim . . . Something fresh, something light . . .

BUTCH

Minou Drouet! The tough-guy turned into a poetess.

SLIM

Bitch!

BABALU

It's true. When's your book coming out? Your Poèmes Homosexuels, Minou?

SLIM

Shut your mouth, belly dancer. Forget to put the ruby in your belly-button this evening?

MIMI-PINSON

No, she forgot it at Cuirette's, this morning . . .

BABALU

Mimi-Pinson, you liar! I slept at our place last night!

HOSANNA

Didn't score yesterday, Babalu?

BABALU

For once I wanted to be just like you. Innocent.

CANDY-BABY

Hey, hey, hey girls. We didn't come here to get our coiffures all crumpled![30]

BUTCH

What coiffures?

MARCEL-GERARD

Candy's right. Mimi-Pinson gathered us here, together, tonight . . .

SLIM

She's so tangled up in her phony language, she . . . [31]

MARCEL-GERARD

And promised us a surprise. Let's wait and see the surprise, girls, uh, guys, before we start tearing into each other.[32] That will happen soon enough if the surprise isn't a gorgeous, male . . .

MIMI-PINSON

The bunch of you can keep on tearing each other's hair out then, because the surprise isn't a gorgeous male at all. In fact . . .

HOSANNA

That's it, Gilda's back!

MIMI-PINSON

Worse than that, my darlings!

BUTCH

It can't be!

MIMI-PINSON

Oh yes it can . . .

CUIRETTE

To bring us here for something worse than Gilda! Really!

(MIMI-PINSON goes onto the stage and takes the mike.)

BUTCH

If it's you that's gonna sing, I've heard that's worse than anything!

MIMI-PINSON (into the mike)

Don't worry, Butch, I'm not gonna sing . . .

BRIGITTE

I bet she's gonna announce her "annual party" that costs twenty-five bucks a couple.

CANDY-BABY

I won't be able to come this year. My husband's on unemployment insurance.

HOSANNA

You're gonna have to buy yourself a new bedsheet, Brigitte.

BRIGITTE

Bitch! You know damn well this isn't a bedsheet I'm wearing! It's pure satin, dyed in the wool.[33] And it's new.

SLIM

Well, let's see now, it's the one you wore when you were elected Miss Meat Rack four years ago.

BRIGITTE

That's not true! I haven't even been in the city for four years!

BUTCH

Don't start her crying. Her make-up runs and then her pimples show.

MIMI-PINSON (into the microphone)

All right. Maybe I can make my announcement now, my surprise . . . I've been standing around for five minutes with this microphone.

BUTCH

But we're not finished fighting . . .

(COWBOY comes and plants himself in front of BUTCH.)

BUTCH

Know something, Cowboy? If I was a guy, I'd think you were sexy. She thinks she frightens everybody, but she's no more male than her mother.

MIMI-PINSON

Ladies and gentlemen . . .

BUTCH

GentleMAN! I'm by myself.

MIMI-PINSON

Okay, all right! Ladies, and Butch! I now have the extreme pleasure to announce to you the return of one our great stars.

BABALU

Here we go . . . Estelle Caron's started doing the cabarets again!

MIMI-PINSON

I give you, the one and only, the divine . . .

HOSANNA

Greta Garbo is here?

(The DUCHESS enters brusquely.)

DUCHESS

Great Garbo is no more. Long live the Duchess of Langeais!

THE OTHERS

The duchess!

BABALU

The duchess is back from Mexico!

MARCEL-GERARD

I can't take this! I just can't take it!

DUCHESS

Bonsoir, my jewels!

BUTCH

She's still got her Lola Lee costume!

MARCEL-GERARD

She's going to sing us Won't You Dance the Charleston, Heston?, I suppose?

CUIRETTE

Yeah, right. Suppose, like in suppository!

DUCHESS

I'm so happy to be back here among you again.

MARCEL-GERARD

You may be, but we're not!

DUCHESS

And as well, I have the pleasure of noticing in the congregation the presence of one of the biggest gossips in metropolitan Montreal, Mr. Marcel-Gérard!

MARCEL-GERARD

Bitch!

DUCHESS

Who, I certainly hope, will not be announcing his marriage to me in the next issue of his paper. I would like, then, to begin my programme of songs for this evening with an imitation which will remain reknown forevermore in the annals of . . . of . . .

HOSANNA

In whose anals?[34] C'mon, say it!

DUCHESS

In the ANNALS of drag! Here it is, then, my beloved public.

EVERYONE

Lola Lee!

DUCHESS

Bunch of bitches! Music, Maestro, please!

MARCEL-GERARD

I'm tired of seeing her do that, I'm fucking tired of it!

SONG: WON'T YOU DANCE THE CHARLESTON, HESTON?

DUCHESS

He sat propped at the bar, eyes open wide,
Drinking a whisky sour, milk on the side,
I pulled up my gloves, and walked up to him . . .

MARCEL-GERARD

It's really worth it! Yes it's really worth all that trouble, to go and spend a year in Mexico and come back just looking older!

(The DUCHESS comes down from the stage and goes over to MARCEL-GERARD who backs up, frightened.)

DUCHESS

Hello, Marcel!

(She shakes MARCEL's hand. MARCEL starts to squeal in pain.)

DUCHESS

It's worth the trouble to go and spend a year in Mexico and come back just looking what?

MARCEL-GERARD

Let go! You're breaking my hand!

DUCHESS

Just looking what?

MARCEL-GERARD

Well, I can't exactly tell you you're beautiful! Jesus Christ, you're frightening!

(The DUCHESS releases MARCEL.)

DUCHESS

While I was growing older in Mexico, it seems that you were growing more ridiculous in Montreal. It appears that you had such a need to be talked about that you took every possible imaginable means to do it, and you screwed up every time! It seems that while you were dreaming of international scandals, you ended up among the little local gossips, instead!

MARCEL-GERARD

You'll find out, Duchess, that I'm recognized everywhere by everyone. When I come here, it's quite simple, I have to hide myself, because all the little boys ask me for autographs!

DUCHESS

Oh, poor little child! Such a pity! She's a star, and she's complaining!

BABALU

However, while she was still having her beautiful dreams, she was really happy . . .

BRIGITTE

She was carrying herself off into the clouds!

CUIRETTE

No, she was carrying herself on the left![35]

SLIM

She used to tell us all her plans . . . her international adventures!

BUTCH

She was completely transformed.

DUCHESS

A real Alice in Wonderland! Well, her dream is over. Alice has just awakened . . . She's just realized she isn't international at all, Alice!

SONG: MEATRACK WALTZ

CHORUS

We've popped Alice's balloon!
We've popped Alice's balloon!
Alice who thought she'd be elected Miss
Has fallen on her ass . . . Ah! How sad!

We've popped Alice's balloon!
We've popped Alice's balloon!

She's going to throw herself off a building
Unless she throws herself with both feet into vice!
We'll have to blow up Alice's balloon again!
We'll have to blow up Alice's balloon again!

DUCHESS

Ah! Come! Ah, come! Ah, come!
Lean on my shoulder!
Come and dry your tears!
I'll take care of your fears!
Stop! Stop your weeping! O' Willow!
All together now . . .

DUCHESS and CHORUS

Ah! Come! Ah, come! Ah, come!
Lean on my shoulder . . . etc.

(LOLA and LOUISE have come in a moment before the end of the song.)

(Right after the waltz, one TRANSVESTITE notices them and gives a cry of "dismay" . . . .)

BABALU

Oh my God! Women!

(The DUCHESS also gives out her little cry of "dismay," then, recognizing LOLA:)

DUCHESS

Ah! It's not serious, girls. It's only Lola Lee . . .

LOLA LEE

What do you mean, "only Lola Lee?"

DUCHESS

Good heavens, I've just insulted a woman! (very urbane) You know, of course, my dear, that real women are strictly forbidden entry into this society except for a few rare exceptions, which you have the distinct honour of being . . .

LOLA LEE (in the same tone)

I do not often abuse this precious privilege . . . This place turns my stomach!

MIMI-PINSON

You wouldn't have said that once upon a time, Lola , . .

LOLA LEE

I never said it didn't turn my stomach, so shut your yap, Mimi! I worked for you because I was on the streets, but your job made me puke if you really wanna know!

MIMI-PINSON

Always so charming . . .

BRIGITTE

That thing worked here once?

BUTCH (to LOUISE)

Hello, baby . . .

MIMI-PINSON

Lola? She was the house attraction for almost a year . . .

LOUISE

Hi . . .

DUCHESS

You never heard of the "Twelve Women - One Man Revue?" Well, she was the man!

LOLA LEE

Right, and you were the twelve women!

BUTCH (to LOUISE)

Whatcha doin' tonight?

LOUISE

I'm out with my sister . . .

BUTCH

Wow! You people do it as a family?

DUCHESS (noticing LOUISE)

Ah, and what have we here? Who is this charming child? Lola, you haven't started swinging the other way, have you?

LOLA LEE

Never fear, Duchess . . . I'd like you to meet my sister, Louise!

DUCHESS (bitchily)

Louise Lee,

LOUISE

No. Louise Tétrault!

LOLA LEE

Shut up, you!

MARCEL-GERARD (who has been hiding behind COWBOY since LOLA's arrival.)

Aha! At last! I know it! I know her name! Her name's Tétrault! Tétrault! It's too much! It can't be true! Not to be believed! Lola Lee's name is Tétrault!

LOUISE
Didn't they know your name was Tétrault?

LOLA LEE
No, they didn't know! Do you realize that it's only been five years that this little miscarriage has been trying every possible way to find it out!

LOUISE
Why?

LOLA LEE
He's a journalist, Louise, and journalists always want to know everything . . .

LOUISE (smiling at MARCEL)
A journalist . . .

LOLA LEE
No, Louise, be careful. Just a minute. You don't go throwing yourself into the arms of the first newspaperman who comes along! First thing you know you'll find yourself being a witness or a bridesmaid at some faggot wedding!

LOUISE
That'd be perfect for publicity . . .

(She approaches MARCEL.)

Delighted to meet you . . . My name is Louise Tétrault, I'm Lola Lee's sister, and I've just won the Lucille Dumont trophy. . . .

LOLA LEE (grabs her by an arm)
Hey, whoa there! Hold on a minute! That's enough! Mind opening your trap only when I ask you to? I brought you over here to see, Louise, to watch . . . . Okay? Look as much as you want . . .

BRIGITTE
But don't touch!

BUTCH
I wouldn't mind being touched. It's been a long time since I humped a waitress!

LOUISE
How d'you know I'm a waitress?

CANDY-BABY
Because of your beautiful black silk gown, studded with rhinestones and your matching tiara, my dear.

LOUISE
Oh, sorry . . . You see, I forgot I was wearing this. But I guess I'll have to get used to wearing other things, eh? When I'm . . .

LOLA LEE

Louise! Stay close to me, will you?

BUTCH

You don't want to leave her with me for a while, Lola?

LOLA LEE

Look here, Butch . . . She's just freshly arrived in Montreal . . . I bet she hasn't even figured out you're a girl yet!

LOUISE

She's a girl?

BUTCH (to LOLA)

Bitch!

LOLA LEE

I'd like to believe it's just dark in here, Louise, but open your eyes a little! God!

COWBOY (to LOUISE)

But I'm not a girl, baby.

LOLA LEE

No, but you're no better than one, Cowgirl.

COWBOY

What would you know about it?

BRIGITTE

Oh . . . If I find out you're going out with women, Cowboy . . .

MARINE

You won't get paid in trade tonight!

MARCEL-GERARD (to LOUISE)

And what's her first name? She wasn't always called Lola Tétrault.

LOLA LEE

Louise!

LOUISE

Well . . . Rita . . .

MARCEL-GERARD

Rita! Rita! Rita Tétrault! It's too beautiful! I'm going to faint!

LOLA LEE (to LOUISE)

Bitch!

LOUISE

Why did you want to show me all this? It wasn't necessary for me to see all this! There's only, well, you know what I mean! There's even one that says he's a duchess! I'm not kidding!

LOLA LEE

You think this's got nothing to do with your "future career as a star," what's going on here, Lyla Jasmin? I brought you here on purpose to show you the guys you can meet, in fact I'd say the guys you'll meet most often when you're a star, Lyla Jasmin. You didn't look hard enough . . . This one here, and that one . . . They're my dancers that you thought were so sexy a while ago!

SONG: FROM THE FIRST TO THE LAST[36]

LOLA LEE

From the first to the last,
Whether their hair's blonde or black!
Don't trust them at all, Louise, please!
Don't trust them at all!
They've got their knives out behind your back! Go back!

When a guy wants to be near you,
The better looking he is, beware!
He don't want you at all, Louise, he's
Just gonna find you dull.
He'll make you suffer and he won't care! I swear!

Take a good look around.
Open your eyes and you'll see.
All these men here, Louise, we
See them every year,
Everyone's seen them on T.V. You see?

They go out with you 'cause you're nice!
They go out with you 'cause you're fun!
But when their fun's through, Louise, you
Won't know what to do,
'Cause in bed you'll be on your own! Alone!

EVERYBODY

From the first to the last,
Whether their hair's blonde or black!
Don't trust them at all, Louise, please!
Don't trust them at all!
They've got their knives out behind your back! Go back!

DUCHESS

Everything she says is true, Louise. Take me for instance.

LOLA LEE

It wasn't you I was talking about, Duchess!

DUCHESS

All of that's happened to me too, you know. And all the handsome men were my downfall!

LOLA LEE

Yeah, and I bet they didn't miss you. Your trip to Mexico didn't improve you, Duchess. Have I told you when you're dressed like that you look like a whale in heat?

DUCHESS

Do you know who I'm dressed up to look like, Rita?

LOLA LEE

Yes, I know who you're TRYING to look like, Edward![37]

MARCEL-GERARD

Edward! Edward!

LOLA LEE

Only, to do it, you'd have to get rid of some of that fat with a scoop shovel!

MARCEL-GERARD

I'm telling you, she's vulgar, this Rita Tétrault, when she lets herself go!

LOLA LEE

And you, Marcel-Gérard, shut your trap, eh? Because it won't be long before you'll be joining the duchess. You've been trying everything to make it for six - seven years now, and still you're nowhere! You're even a flop in the movies! You're gonna finish up just like the duchess . . .

(to LOUISE)

Because she was a "revelation" too, once upon a time!

MARCEL-GERARD

Listen you . . . Did you come here just to insult us?

LOLA LEE

That's right, I've gotta be nice to him. Otherwise he gets his G-string all tied up in knots.[38]

MARCEL-GERARD

I don't like people laughing at me.

DUCHESS

Oh come on, darling. Nobody in Montreal takes enough notice of you to laugh at you.[39]

MARCEL-GERARD

Bitch!

LOLA LEE

Bitch? That's a bitch and a half, little lady!

MARCEL-GERARD

I forbid you to speak to me as if I were a female. It could jeopar-

dize my job!

LOLA LEE

His job! What job! A blow-job's all you'll ever get . . . If you're lucky . . .[40]

SONG: BITCH[41]

DUCHESS

You try to play the lady but you don't know how!
You've got all the culture of a barnyard cow!
She thinks because she left the East End, now she's got class,
But every time she puts her nose up, she falls on her ass!

MARCEL-GERARD

Bitch!

LOLA LEE

Oh look who's talking now: Lady Hollywood!
Most all her tales are lies, but we know all that.
You look as much like a duchess as Camelien Houde![42]
Wrapped up in all your tacky rings and wrinkles and fat!

DUCHESS

Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch!

MARCEL-GERARD

If Lola hates me now for all the things I've said,
If she thinks I'm a rat, she ain't seen nothing yet!
I never knew her real name before. Now I know!
Just wait 'til she sees what I write about Rita Tétrault!

LOLA LEE

Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch!

LOLA LEE

If you think I'll allow you to reveal my name.

MARCEL-GERARD

You know you can't prevent me, it's my legal right!

DUCHESS

Oh, come now, ladies, stop. This is no longer a game!

MARCEL-GERARD and LOLA

You, Duchess, shut your trap, and you stay out of our fight!

LOLA LEE, MARCEL-GERARD and DUCHESS

We love our quarrels and our spats. At fights we excel.
We hate each other but we love each other as well.
These aren't boulders that we heave, just pebbles that we pitch,
But publicity is what we need, and that's why we . . .
Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch! Bitch!

(They finish the song, laughing and throwing themselves into each other's arms.)

LOUISE

I thought you hated each other!

LOLA LEE (laughing)

Sure, all the girls hate each other, eh?

EVERYBODY

Of course.

LOLA LEE

It's always like this in our line of work, Louise. Everybody hates everybody; everybody fights with everybody; everybody tears each other's hair out; we're always pissed off at each other; everyone does things they should be hung for; but, in the end, they always throw themselves into each other's arms . . .

LOUISE

Why?

LOLA LEE

'Cause you can't afford the luxury of enemies, in this business, Louise. Everybody pretends to like everybody else, and as they all play the game, they all end up believing it.

MIMI-PINSON

A spoonful of Javex, a spoonful of honey, a spoonful of Javex, a spoonful of honey . . .

LOUISE

And you live in all this . . .

LOLA LEE

YOU'RE going to live in all this too. Don't forget it, Louise.

LOUISE

I'd like to go now, Rita . . .

LOLA LEE

Oh no. You're staying right to the end. We interrupted the show as we walked in. We might as well watch the rest . . .

DUCHESS

I'm not singing any more tonight . . . Maman is a bit depressed. My great comeback in Montreal has flopped. That means I've got to wait for a more propicious moment to get up on the boards again.

LOLA LEE

On the steel beams,[43] you mean. With your weight.

DUCHESS

Why is it that you want to talk so much about my weight tonight? Have YOU been getting heavier lately?

MIMI-PINSON

Ladies, and gentleMAN. The Duchess of Langeais, having had a slight attack of dizziness . . . The show will go on . . . From the ranks of Mimi-Pinson's discoveries, here are our four bearded ladies, Les Quatre Barbuses,[44] in one of their own compositions, When It's Cold Outside!

MARCEL-GERARD

Again! They sang that goddamn song at us all last week! We know they're gonna win! They're the only ones that showed up!

LOLA LEE

Listen to that, Louise. Another trophy story.

(BUTCH and three other TRANSVESTITES have mounted the stage.)

LOUISE

I wanna get outa here, Rita. Please!

LOLA LEE

No!

SONG: WHEN IT'S COLD OUTSIDE

LES QUATRE BARBUSES

When a customer comes through the door,
First thing you do,
You look at him, you check him out
To see how well he's hung.
If he's cute, you approach him,
You open your mouth up to suck.
If he's handsome, you throw yourself at him
Before the others jump on top of him.
If it's warm outside
You can do it to him softly,
But if it's cold outside
The customer must be satisfied.

If the moon is hanging
In the transparent sky,
You don't have to look for things
To satisfy your customer.
But if the sky is moonless!
And it's freezing cold,
You've gotta light his fire
So he'll be proud of who he is.

EVERYONE except LOUISE

If it's warm outside
You can go at him softly,
But if it's cold outside
The customer must be satisfied.

LES QUATRE BARBUSES

When your customer comes through the door
Evening after next,
You have to wait for him to spot you
Before going over to him.
If he pretends he doesn't see you
Or if he pouts and looks sulky
It's because you don't interest him
'Cause you were too hard or too soft on him!

EVERYBODY

If it's warm outside
You can do it to him softly,
But if it's cold outside
The customer must be satisfied.
If your customer is sweet
You can do it to him softly,
But if your customer is hot
You've really gotta move your ass.

(During the song, BUTCH has come down from the stage and has come over to flirt with LOUISE.)

LOUISE

Buzz off! Get away from me! You're getting on my nerves!

(COWBOY signals to MIMI-PINSON.)

MIMI-PINSON

Lola!

COWBOY (to LOUISE)

You don't have to believe everything she says, Louise . . .

CUIRETTE

Take it easy. Cool down a bit . . .

MIMI-PINSON

I've got a couple a things to ask you . . . I've got this new costume and I'm not sure it . . . Will you come and take a look at it?

LOLA LEE (to the OTHERS)

You be careful with my sister, eh?

LOUISE

I wanna go with you, Rita . . .

LOLA LEE

That's the artists's life, Louise! Just think what it's gonna be like when you're a star! They're all gonna be flocking after you. You'll look like a bunch of grapes . . . The whole gang of little flits glued to you like flies on shit! When you've got a few cents they'll rip you off, and when you've got a boyfriend they'll come down on you like a cloud of locusts. Do you really want to find yourself all alone in the middle of a bunch of hairy caterpillars that're eating you up, Louise!

(Long silence.)

LOLA LEE

Good luck, dear . . .

(She exits with MIMI-PINSON.)

LOUISE

You don't look like a turkey with your trophy, eh?
You don't look like a turkey with your black smock, eh?
You couldn't wait until tomorrow, eh?
To come and play the fool all dressed in your Sunday best!
You don't look like a turkey with your wig, eh?
You don't look like a turkey with your Lyla Jasmin, eh?
You couldn't wait until tomorrow, eh?
To come and play the fool a little less disguised?

HOSANNA

We know why your sister brought you over here, Louise.

CANDY-BABY

Don't let her get to you.

MONA LISA

She's been making the rules for a long time and we're starting to get sick of her . . .

SLIM

Don't let her get to you.

CUIRETTE

Take it easy.

BUTCH

Take it easy.

LOUISE

Don't you come near me!

BRIGITTE

Pull in your claws. There's nothing to worry about . . .

BABALU

Your sister just wanted to shock you.

CUIRETTE

Take it easy . . .

CANDY-BABY

Don't let her get to you!

BABALU

Don't get yourself uptight.

HOSANNA

Sometimes people aren't what we think, but it isn't all that bad . . .

COWBOY

Take it easy . . .

CUIRETTE

You just have to take people the way they are . . .

MONA LISA

Don't let her get to you.

HOSANNA

Don't let her get to you, Louise. Don't let her get to you. Hey, come on . . . If you wanta get along in life, you've gotta join in the dance.

SONG: YOU'VE GOT TO JOIN IN THE DANCE

BOYS

Things aren't always what they seem, Louise.
Sometimes people aren't what you think.
But you've got to take them just as they are, Louise.
To get along, you've got to join in the dance.

LOUISE

To get along, you've got to join in the dance?
Well then, make room for me,
I'm coming.
Sometimes people aren't what you think?
Well, then, I'm not a waitress, boys,
And my name isn't Louise!
My black smock, my blonde wig,
They're just disguise.
Nothing but my trophy is real.
My name is Lyla Jasmin, you're my lovers.
My sister's called Rita, and she's the one
Who isn't real!

EVERYBODY

Things aren't always what they seem, Lyla.
Sometimes people aren't what you think,
But you've got to take them just as they are, Lyla.
To get along, you've got to join in the dance!

LOLA LEE
You poor thing! You'll never understand that the old days are gone, Mimi. Those things aren't catchy anymore. It's over. Your goddamn dress'll just make everybody laugh.

MIMI-PINSON
Well, sure, but what'd'ya want? It's my style . . .

LOLA LEE
Then change your style. Shit! Look at me! How many times have I changed my style since we've known each other?

MIMI-PINSON
When you're a female impersonator, Lola, you adopt a style and you don't give it up!

LOLA LEE
All right! Okay! Don't get all pissed off . . . But if you don't want my advice, don't ask for it!

(She goes towards her sister.)

MIMI-PINSON (to MARCEL)
It's the most beautiful dress I've ever made.

LOLA LEE
Well, how d'ya like my friends, Louise?

LOUISE
I think they're all right!

LOLA LEE
What?

LOUISE
Sure. They scared me a little at first, but I'll get used to it. All I have to do is learn how to be a bitch too, Rita!

LOLA LEE (to COWBOY and CUIRETTE)
What'd you tell her while I wasn't here, you two?

COWBOY and CUIRETTE
Nothing . . . Nothing . . .

LOUISE
They didn't say anything, Rita. If you wanted to shock me and get me scared, all you had to do was bring me in here and out again. We've stayed too long, Rita. I've had time to find out that these people are just like anybody else . . .

CUIRETTE
When'll we see you again, baby?

LOUISE
Anytime, baby!

(LOLA takes her by the arm.)

LOLA LEE
You haven't had enough, eh? It's gonna take more to discourage you, is it? Well, I've got something else to show you, if you want to know, Lyla Jasmin! Marcel, Duchess, we're going over to Betty Bird's.

MARCEL-GERARD
Lola! You've got to be kidding! You don't really want to take your sister over to Betty's!

LOLA LEE
Why not? I told her I was gonna take her on a tour to see ALL my friends!

MIMI-PINSON
Lola! You know Betty'd love to see you dead, ever since you left.

LOLA LEE
Sure, I know it. And I haven't been back since. Since the business with Johnny.

LOUISE
Johnny?

LOLA LEE
Get going, little star! In front! I don't wanna lose you. We're going to Betty Bird's!

LOUISE
What's Betty Bird's?

LOLA LEE
She's a dear friend! A wonderful girlfriend! A sister, Louise, a sister!

(They go out.)

DUCHESS
You go with them, Marcel, I'm going to change.

MARCEL-GERARD
This'll make a great article.

DUCHESS
If you say one single word about what's gone on in here tonight, in your little scrap of a toilet paper, I'll strangle you with your wig!

(MARCEL exits.)

(The DUCHESS goes towards the dressing room.)

BUTCH
Well, what a shitty evening.

SLIM

The evening isn't over.

BABALU

Well, what'll we do? Want to dance?

COWBOY

Are you gonna dance, Brigitte?

BRIGITTE

No.

CUIRETTE

Want to dance, Candy?

CANDY-BABY

No.

MARINE

Want to dance, Hosanna?

HOSANNA

No.

BABALU

Want to dance, Mimi?

MIMI-PINSON

No.

SLIM

Want to dance, Mona Lisa?

MONA LISA

No.

BUTCH

Hey Duchess, wanna dance? D'you wanna dance?

(Blackout.)

Scene 6

The DUCHESS's dressing room. The DUCHESS, in scanty attire, is sitting at her mirror combing her blonde wig.

SONG: THE DUCHESS'S LAMENT

DUCHESS

Passing over Montreal
In my great steel bird
I felt like shouting
To all my girlfriends at Pal's:

Get ready girls, the duchess has returned!
Put on all your furs, get out your jewels!
From on high in the air the Duchess of Langeais is calling you:
If you don't have anything to put on, you'll come stark naked!
Get ready girls, the duchess has come back!
With all her funny faces, with all her tricks!
From on high in the air the Duchess of Langeais is calling you:
I come seeking to return to the fold, because I'm down and out.

When the plane settled down at Dorval
And no one was waiting for me
Even though I was expecting that
It nevertheless made me feel like hell.
Rejoice, girls, the duchess has returned!

Get out your boring games, point your rifles,
From the depths of her dressing room, in the middle of her crinolines
The duchess is fretting as if she were naked.
Rejoice girls, the duchess has returned!
To dance her tap dances, and to play the mouth organ,
To try to put smiles on your ruined faces
So as not to die all alone! So as not to die naked and alone!
Rejoice girls, the duchess has returned.
Laugh at her big ass, laugh at her fat belly,
But don't worry, she can take a lot.
The Duchess of Langeais isn't just anyone!
Rejoice girls, the duchess has returned!
Hit her, bash her down, that's all she deserves,
She's going to drag herself along the ground, but when she's reached her limit,
She's going to die on her feet, even if she's going to die alone and destitute!

Rejoice, girls, rejoice!
The Duchess of Langeais has fallen into the pit!

ACT II

Scene 1

The DUCHESS OF LANGEAIS' dressing room. She has finished dressing. She goes out slowly from the dressing room and from the Meat Rack. The ten PROSTITUTES enter the stage.

SONG: WELCOME TO MISS BETTY BIRD'S[45]

PURPLE

Welcome to Miss Betty Bird's,
What you find here ain't ordinary,
This bird don't give a damn or care
What people say about her.

THE GIRLS

Des birds, des birds, des birds, des birds . . .

PURPLE

Betty's birds cost twenty-five,
Careful what you do as you arrive,
They fly away when they've been paid
But they give you fair trade!

THE GIRLS

Des birds, des birds, des birds, des birds . . .

PURPLE

Betty Bird's is Oriental
Silks and pearls and frankincense,
Betty Bird's is smoking marijuana
In little rooms just made for love.
Betty has girls of every kind
Who'll do whatever's on your mind,
With eyes that sparkle in the night
Her girls can even serve you moonlight!

Later on you go your way,
Worn out but feeling okay,
To wave good-bye, you turn about,
But all the lights have gone out!

THE GIRLS

Welcome to Miss Betty Bird's,
What you find here ain't ordinary,

This bird don't give a damn or care
What people say about her.

BETTY BIRD (spoken)
There's two birds, baby. And if you don't like it, get out!

THE GIRLS
Des birds, des birds, des birds, des birds . . .

BETTY BIRD
Purple . . . Purple . . . I'm talking to you.

PURPLE
Yeah, Betty, okay. I heard you. What's the matter now?

BETTY BIRD
The clients, Purple, it's one hour, tops. Seems to me I already told you that . . .

PURPLE
If I want to do overtime, it's my business, Betty!

VIOLET
Overtime! SHE keeps them longer? Wow! She must enjoy it!

PURPLE
In this life, Violet, you have to tell yourself one thing . . .

BETTY BIRD
Purple, you watch what you're going to say . . .

PURPLE
Don't worry, Betty, I won't scare her away. That's not my style! There's one thing that's important in life, my sweet little Violet, and that's to love your work.

TOPAZE
Listen to her . . .

SANDY
If that isn't just beautiful . . .

SCARLET
The sermon on the mount, and the whole shebang. You've been bitching about your work all your life, Purple. Don't try to play the innocent young thing tonight.

PURPLE
I have not been bitching all my life. I've enjoyed my work if you want to know, Scarlet . . .

SCARLET
Yeah, what about right now?

PURPLE (looking at BETTY)
Right now, it isn't my work I hate . . . Jesus, I can never talk seriously with you people . . .

VIOLET
You can talk seriously to me. I'll listen to you . . .

BETTY BIRD
That's just it. YOU shouldn't listen to her drivel, Violet . . . She only makes up stories. The farther you get away from her, baby, the better off you'll be.

BUTCH (to PURPLE)
You sure attract all the punches, Purple.

PURPLE
We'll see about that. Just let her try to punch me. Let her try!

VIOLET
Hey, that way, if we feel like it, we could keep the clients longer.

SCARLET
I guess you haven't been here very long. You don't know the gimmicks yet.

VIOLET
The what?

RAINBOW
The gimmicks. When you've got a client that turns you off, you do him in twenty minutes, and if there's a good-looking guy who comes in after, you keep him longer . . .

TOPAZE
Yeah, but the good-looking guys are rare . . .

CREAM
That's it. Discourage her right at the beginning.

ROSE
Well, I think it's a good thing to know what you're in for right at the start.

BUTCH
A real whore's job.[46]

BETTY BIRD
Butch, I already told you to watch your language. This is a bordello here, not a garage.

AVOCADO
Well, it's just like a garage . . . They come . . . They go . . .

BETTY BIRD

We're the only one, the only official bordello in the whole city of Montreal, do you know that? Betty Bird is the only madam that nobody has ever dared to touch.

BUTCH

There she goes again with her commercial.

PURPLE

If the people in high places don't dare touch you, Betty, it's because you laid them all when you were younger. They're afraid of scandal.

BETTY BIRD (to herself)

I must say, if I published my memoires . . . (louder) And I want my girls to have some class!

AVOCADO

Okay, okay . . . We got class when there's people here, but when we're alone we get fed up with it sometimes . . .

BETTY BIRD

You're wrong, Avocado. You can't do that. You have to hold onto your dignity all the time, every minute of the day and night . . . That way you can be sure you'll never make a mistake!

(Looking at PURPLE.)

You've got to get rid of all the vulgarity and only let yourself show what's beautiful.

PURPLE

We're not a bunch of nuns, all locked away, for Chrissake![47] And besides, the most beautiful things about me are vulgar. What d'ya want anyway? It's not my fault! I came into the world like I am and I'm gonna die that way.

BETTY BIRD

Watch it, you! You could die prematurely! Hmm. That reminds me . . . Sandy!

SANDY

Great, now it's my turn . . . You think I'm vulgar too, Birdie?

BETTY BIRD

Am I gonna have to show you how to make use of your whip?

SANDY

What d'ya mean?

BETTY BIRD

She asks what I mean! You can't leave any marks, Sandy. When are you gonna get that through your head?

SANDY

I'm not leaving any. Not any more . . .

BETTY BIRD

Look, sweetie, I'm not blind . . . When Mr. Emile left yesterday . . .

SANDY

Oh him . . . That's different. He's the one that asks me to leave marks, Betty. And he gives me extra money . . .

BETTY BIRD

Well, next time you'll refuse his extra money, that's all! The rates are fixed here, lady, and so is the profit! You aren't supposed to accept tips! I don't care to be presented with a corpse one of these days!

SANDY

I'm being careful . . .

BETTY BIRD

There's no either this or that. Go easy on the whip, Sandy!

ROSE

If you don't want any corpses, you better tell Scarlet to be careful with her Armand, Betty . . . That man's nearly eighty, and he'll end up croaking in her arms.

SCARLET

Don't worry about him, Rose, he can still take it . . .

BETTY BIRD

Well, be careful all the same, eh, my lovely Scarlet . . . Don't get him too excited.

PURPLE

Scarlet, getting somebody excited? Don't make me laugh! She's even less sexy than Mickey Mouse's wife!

SCARLET (Laughing)

It's lucky you're a friend, Purple, 'cause it's been a long time since I slapped you across the face!

BETTY BIRD

Scarlet! I'm gonna give you such a hit!

(All the girls burst out laughing.)

SCARLET (mocking)

I'm gonna give you such a hit, baby!

PURPLE

All right then, slap me across the face. Watch!

BETTY BIRD
Girls! Girls! Stop shouting like that . . . We'll have the firemen in here!

TOPAZE
Yippee!

BETTY BIRD
Quiet down there! Good. You can't even hear yourself think in here anymore!

(Silence.)

SANDY
Well, I've got a feeling it's gonna be quiet tonight!

VIOLET
Well, I already had two . . .

SCARLET
Hmm . . . Lucky! What if I told you I've already had six, huh? And six, little girl, doesn't make a full evening.

PURPLE
Listen, Violet, I want to ask you something. Are you old enough?

BETTY BIRD
Purple!

VIOLET
Why?

PURPLE
No reason, no reason. I just wanted to know . . .

ROSE
Don't tell me we're gonna have to sleep tonight! When I sleep at night I get all off balance!

SCARLET
Hey, Violet . . . On a good evening here, I go through . . . Fooh!

(She counts on her fingers.)

BETTY BIRD
Stop it. You're going to frighten her again.

PURPLE
Frighten her! Jesus!

(CANDY-BABY enters the scene, running, He is out of breath.)

RAINBOW

Well, speaking of frights . . .

CANDY-BABY

Sorry, I'm all out of breath. I ran like a son of a bitch . . . I mean, like a . . . [48] I ran as fast as I could . . .

BETTY BIRD

S'about time you got here . . .

CANDY-BABY

Is he here yet?

BETTY BIRD

No. You're lucky. 'Cause he would've been waiting for a long time wouldn't he? You were supposed to be here at two o'clock, Candy . . .

CANDY-BABY

Yeah, I know, but . . . Listen to what I've got to tell you and you'll understand . . . I told you we were having a surprise party at the Meat Rack,eh? Well, guess what the surprise was! The Duchess of Langeais, herself, in person!

BETTY BIRD

The Mexican sun didn't kill her, eh?

VIOLET

You know a duchess?

PURPLE

Stay out of it, Violet, I don't think this is the time . . . Come over here . . .

CANDY-BABY

And that's not all . . . Guess who showed up around three o'clock . . . Lola Lee, dear, Lola Lee, with her sister who just won some singing contest! Now, are you ready for this, baby? They're all coming over here! The whole gang! Lola, her sister, Marcel-Gérard, you know, the newspaper man who likes you so much, and the Duchess! So I had to run over to warn you . . .

PURPLE

What're you gonna do, Betty?

BETTY BIRD

Nothing. Nothing at all . . . I'll let them come . . . The old gang'll be all together again at last . . . It might be a lot of fun, eh, Purple?

CANDY-BABY

Whew! I'm so uptight I can't stand still . . . If HE came, though, that'd calm down my nerves.

VIOLET
I guess I'll never understand nothing here . . . There's always so many things going on . . .

CREAM
We're not asking you to understand, smarty! You're not here to be intelligent.

VIOLET
But, you know, there's one thing I'm still not sure about . . .

AVOCADO
Only one?

CANDY-BABY
Ooh! I can hardly wait 'til they all get here!

VIOLET
Why does everybody have the names of colours and flowers . . . Violet, Scarlet, Purple . . .

BUTCH
Have you ever seen a flower called Butch, honey?

TOPAZE
You're straight out of a fairy tale! I don't believe it! Don't you know, little girl, that colours and flowers sell better than Simonne's and Linda's?

CANDY-BABY
Did you hear? That's the upstairs door!

PURPLE
And you've gotta tell yourself one thing: when that guy comes in the door there, you're better off calling yourself Violet than Jeannine. It doesn't hurt so much then.

RAINBOW
And when that load of Americans comes up in the summer, you feel so much like merchandise that you're ashamed to keep calling yourself Ginette . . .

AVOCADO
Or Claudette.

ROSE
Or Mariette.

BUTCH
Or Pierrette.

BETTY BIRD
Oh that reminds me . . . While there's nobody here, you should use the time to practise your little number for the Americans, girls . . .

SANDY
Ah, not all those mincing little 1930's steps again! I'm tired!

(LOLA, LOUISE, and MARCEL appear in the doorway.)

PURPLE (who doesn't see them)
Betty's right girls, the young one has to learn it properly . . . She still doesn't know it good enough . . . Come on girls, into your harness . . . And a-one, and a-two, and a-three . . .

SONG: HELLO BABY[49]

BETTY BIRD and GIRLS
Hello, Baby, how are you?
Do you want to have some fun?
Do you want to know my name?
Well, Baby, my name is The Name of the Game!

My name is . . . Purple, Scarlet, Rainbow
My name is . . . Cream, Avocado, Sandy
My name is . . . Topaze, Rosy, Butch and Violet!

And I play . . . baseball, football, tennis,
Basketball, cricket, hockey,
Handball, rugby, volleyball,
. . . and Violin!

Hello, Baby, how are you?
Do you want to have some fun?
Do you want to know my name?
Well, Baby, my name is The Name of the Game!

LOLA LEE
Hi, girls! You're always running such a busy little factory.

BUTCH
It is one too! We got quite an assembly line here.[50]

BETTY BIRD
Butch, go to your room. To your room!

BUTCH
Look here! I'm not a child . . .

BETTY BIRD (to LOLA LEE)
What a lovely surprise! How are you, dearest Marigold? Oh! It's true! You've changed your name! It's been such a long time since you've come by to see us . . . You've been neglecting us, Lola, you've been neglecting us . . .

(Noticing MARCEL.)

Well, . . . Were you afraid to bring us over some real men? Hi, Blondie. And who is this charming child here? A new recruit?

LOLA LEE
This is my sister, Louise . . . This is Betty Bird, Louise . . .

LOUISE
Good day[51]. . . Madame Bird . . .

SANDY
Good day! At four o'clock in the morning! She works at night too!

LOLA LEE
She won the Lucille Dumont trophy back home. Just think, eh?

VIOLET
Hey! A trophy! Show us. Let's see it . . .

LOLA LEE
So I'm here to show her where I started my career, 'cause she wants to be a star . . . Like me!

LOUISE (to MARCEL)
What is this place? Are we in the wings at some theatre?

(MARCEL bursts out laughing.)

AVOCADO
Another new one, girls . . . Already we haven't got enough work . . .

RAINBOW
I think I'm gonna go on strike . . .

SCARLET
Is she gonna do it with her trophy? First time in my life I ever heard of a whore called Oscar!

LOUISE
Marcel! We're in a whorehouse!

MARCEL-GERARD
You don't say!

PURPLE (to LOLA)
Hi, Lola.

LOLA LEE (after a few seconds hesitation)
Purple! I was watching you rehearse a minute ago, and I said to myself: I think I know that little round ass over there . . .

LOUISE
Rita worked here?

PURPLE
Have I changed as much as that?

LOLA LEE
It's perhaps 'cause I didn't get a good look at you.

PURPLE
No, it's okay. Never mind looking for reasons. It's true, I'm getting older too . . . It's hard to recognize myself anymore when I walk past a mirror . . . Sometimes I go right by without saying hello to myself, even . . .

BUTCH (to LOUISE)
Hi again, baby!

LOUISE
Is she here again . . . Bugger off and leave me in peace!

MARCEL-GERARD
You're not being very nice with our little Butch . . .

LOUISE
Well, I'm getting tired of being called Baby by another girl . . . Besides, it's too late.

LOLA LEE
You aren't saying anything, Betty?

BETTY BIRD
I was waiting 'til you condescended to speak to me, my dear! It isn't often that the great Lola Lee lowers herself to visit her old friends. And don't bother telling me you never come 'cause you're too busy, Lola. Save yourself a lie! I'm used to never again seeing the girls that go out of here.

CREAM
When they go out of here . . .

LOUISE (to MARCEL.)
Is that true? That my sister started here?

MARCEL-GERARD
Of course!

LOUISE
Jeez! Were you just a dancer or were you . . .

LOLA LEE
Or was I, Louise? Oh, was I!

MARCEL-GERARD
Didn't she ever tell you she used to sing Glow-worm while she was doing a strip tease? At the end of it she only had on three daisies . . . on her head!

BETTY BIRD
She was called Marigold, Louise, and she was the most beautiful girl in

the house . . . All the customers shouted for her . . . Everybody wanted Marigold . . .

TOPAZE
That must've been gay for everybody else!

LOLA LEE
I liked it off and on, here, Betty . . .

LOUISE
Rita!

BETTY BIRD
She was the neatest and cleanest girl, and the one who felt most at home here of any of the girls I've ever had! Hair always well brushed, face always well made up . . . Impeccable appearance.

PURPLE
I started the same time she did . . . It was Johnny that . . . that discovered both of us . . . Her in her town, and me in mine. She wanted to be a cabaret dancer, and so she did what she had to . . .

BETTY BIRD
Yes, to get what she wanted, she did what she had to do . . .

PURPLE
Me, I just didn't want to end up in the street . . . But her, the customers would rather see her dance than go upstairs with the rest of us all together! Every week she worked up a new number . . . Sometimes it was a serious number, other times it was funny . . . . And Saturday night around midnight, everybody would come down here to the pink room and Marigold would do her show . . . The one I liked best was her tap-dance number . . . Jesus it was good! I've tried to do it sometimes, but . . . Hey, Marigold, want to do your tap-dance routine for us? I'd like it . . . There's some parts I don't remember anymore!

(While PURPLE has been speaking, the lighting has changed.

A PROSTITUTE has come to give the tap shoes to LOLA.)

SONG: WHEN THE CLICKERS CLICK[52]

LOLA LEE
When the clickers click
When the clackers clack
Claude cries out he's had it
And Claire clobbers him with a clout.

When the clickers click
When the clackers clack
Claire scrapes and unclenches
And Claude leans over to cheer her.

When the clickers click
When the clackers clack
Claire's clavichord crashes
And Claude's bells clink.

When the clickers click
When the clackers clack
Claire's clients click
And Claude limps like a tramp.

When the clickers click
When the clackers clack
Claire cloisters herself with the sisters of Saint Clare
And Claude's clarion acclimatizes.

When the clickers click
When the clackers clack
Claude's clavicle unblocks
And Claire collapses like a woodlouse.

When the clickers click
When the clackers clack
Claude's clarion starts to click
And Claire's class recycles.

When the clickers click
When the clackers clack
Claude's clan reclaims him
And Claire declaims Claudel!

PURPLE

There just aren't any more girls that do good numbers like that . . .

VIOLET

It's real cute, her routine . . .

BETTY BIRD

One Marigold isn't replaced very easily, girls . . .

SANDY

I don't think it's all that good . . . It's as old-fashioned as our soft shoe!

LOUISE

I've seen her do that number a lot, but I never knew she did it here before . . .

LOLA LEE

This is the place where that routine first saw the light of day, sister dear. It was here that I practised while I was making my connections. You have to find any way you can if you're gonna be a star, Lyla!

BUTCH (to MARCEL)
Yeah! But there's some people who've tried every way they can, and they still haven't made it!

MARCEL-GERARD
You, go and be a smartass somewhere else, Tom-boy!

BETTY BIRD
And when a house like this one loses its Marigold . . .

LOLA LEE
Betty, I've got a favour to ask you . . .

BETTY BIRD
Oh, so that's it . . . It had occurred to me that you didn't come over out of the blue, just for the fun of it . . .

LOLA LEE
Can I talk to you in private?

BETTY BIRD
I don't have that much time, Lola. Customers might come . . .

SCARLET
Customers? We haven't even seen one since Rue des Pignons[53] at nine thirty . . .

LOLA LEE
Purple can look after them . . . Eh, Purple?

PURPLE
Purple can always look after them! Purple is always there when somebody wants a favour . . . But watch out when she finally asks for something . . .

CREAM
Well, if it isn't Aurore,[54] the child martyr, taking off again!

BETTY BIRD
Well, let's go and see what it is you want . . . Come on over here . . .

(BETTY and LOLA retire to a corner of the stage.)

CANDY-BABY
Well, if he isn't coming at all, I'm going home to bed! I'm tired of waiting!

MARCEL-GERARD
It's been a long time since you had to go home to bed, darling!

CANDY-BABY
And what's that supposed to mean?

PURPLE
Don't start in, you two!

CANDY-BABY

Anyway he isn't even supposed to be here. Or should I say, she? It's only the clients who are supposed to come in here. Or else the staff! Unless you came for me, my love . . .

MARCEL-GERARD

Oh stop it! You're making me nauseous . . .

VIOLET (to LOUISE)

Hey, you must be happy to be so lucky, eh? I'd love that, to win a trophy like that . . . Is it heavy?

(She takes the trophy.)

Oh, yeah . . . Aren't you tired of carrying it?

LOUISE (taking back her trophy)

Do you work here too?

VIOLET

I sure do! I'm Violet. Original, eh? That's why I've got these little flowers on my dress . . .

CANDY-BABY

Don't play independent with me, Marcel-Gérard! Nobody ever wants you for anything!

MARCEL-GERARD

Oh? Well, I beg your pardon, then . . .

VIOLET

Does it surprise you? It isn't as bad as all that, y'know . . .

BUTCH (to LOUISE)

Hello again, again, baby!

LOUISE

D'you wanna get hit with this trophy, huh? Wanna get hit?

LOLA LEE

I want her to go . . . I don't care if she's got any talent or not! I don't want her to come and imitate me here! We'll look like two goddamn queens!

BETTY BIRD

That's what you're afraid of isn't it, Marigold . . . Admit it . . . You're just afraid she'll take your place, eh?

LOLA LEE

You're right. I'm at the top of the heap, Betty! I'm at the top of my career, and I want to stay there by myself! I don't want another person just like me who's gonna mimic me, and who's gonna succeed in mimicking me!

BETTY BIRD
What's all this got to do with me?

VIOLET
You make yourself think about other things, and besides that, there's the gimmicks.

LOUISE
The what?

VIOLET
The gimmicks! You don't know very much, do you? When you have an ugly guy who turns you off, well you . . . you do it faster, and then if there's a handsome guy who comes after, you keep him longer . . . That's all!

TOPAZE (who has overheard)
Oh Christ! I've really had it!

PURPLE
Candy! Stop buzzing around like that. You're making me dizzy! Go home to bed. Your man isn't coming.

CANDY-BABY
I wanna know how all this's all gonna turn out.

PURPLE
I'll tell you about it tomorrow . . .

CANDY-BABY
That won't be the same thing!

MARCEL-GERARD
You want to see everything in person?

CANDY-BABY
Yes, my treasure . . . It disturbs you!

MARCEL-GERARD
I mean, you would go and call yourself Candy-Baby, of course, even though you don't look like a baby and you aren't even particularly sweet. Candy-Baby! Why not Blueberry Pie? You're so much like one. You look like a blueberry in that dress . . .

BETTY BIRD
So you want me to scare her . . . You think she's gonna fall into the trap just like that? She doesn't look like a half-wit, Lola. She won't fall for it that easily!

CANDY-BABY
Ooh! I'm beginning to get a little bit tired of being insulted by this yellow-orange pancake here. He's as ugly as a mangy gorilla's ass, and he's trying to play the cute little girl.

VIOLET (to LOUISE)
I love arguments . . . Coming to listen?

MARCEL-GERARD
Maybe I'm not the most gorgeous guy in Montreal, Baby-blue, but I've at least got a gender! That's more than you can say! At least I don't have to dress up like a grape to get a trick!

TOPAZE
That's it, go to it! Tear each other's hair out, girls! I've had about enough of them!

CREAM
I'll bet two cents on that little blonde thing . . .

ROSE
I'll put five cents on the big blue popsicle . . .

MARCEL-GERARD
I can get guys just like that, by the bucketful . . .

RAINBOW
By the carload!

SCARLET
By the ton!

MARCEL-GERARD
And I drop them just like that if I want . . .

CANDY-BABY
They can't be too hurt, then, 'cause they don't get dropped from very high!

MARCEL-GERARD
Just last week . . . I was getting tired of my lanky German beanpole. So, d'you know what I did? I packed my bags and good-bye all!

CANDY-BABY
How original!

LOUISE
You're funny when you're mad, Marcel!

SANDY
He prob'ly went straight out and committed suicide!

BUTCH
Or else he went to light a candle to Saint Jude[55] in thanksgiving for services rendered!

MARCEL-GERARD
And anyway, I've always been against marriages between people of the same sex!

SONG: SALUT

MARCEL-GERARD

I took my toothbrush
My key and my gloves
My afghan coat
My white angora cat
I took a black wig
Didn't know I had it
I took my handkerchiefs
I broke a few mirrors.

Salut! Don't wait up for me!
Don't wait up for me, Salut!
I'm going away, I'm moving
I'm leaving your goddamn cage!
Salut! Don't wait up for me!
Don't wait up for me, Salut!
Don't feel remorseful
It's much warmer outside!
Salut! Don't wait up for me!
Don't wait up for me, Salut!
Your air is too toxic!
I'm taking off to Mexico!
Salut! Don't wait up for me!
Don't wait up for me, Salut!
You're certainly not the sun
But you're nice all the same!
Salut!

How cute I thought he was
With his big zipper
I got my jumpsuit back from you
Now it's only for my use.
I took my big suitcase
I stuffed everything inside
The dog started to howl
But I said to it as I went:

MARCEL-GERARD and LOUISE

Salut! Don't wait up for me!
Don't wait up for me, Salut!
I'm going away, I'm moving
I'm leaving your goddamn cage!
Salut! Don't wait up for me!
Don't wait up for me, Salut!
Don't feel remorseful
It's much warmer outside
Salut! Don't wait up for me!
Don't wait up for me, Salut!
Your air is too toxic
I'm taking off for Mexico!
Salut! Don't wait up for me!
Don't wait up for me, Salut!

You're certainly not the sun
But you're nice all the same!

Forget me my love
Don't do like your dog
Don't bark day and night
That doesn't accomplish anything!
Salut! Salut! Salut!

SCARLET (to LOUISE)
Hey, Oscar! You know you don't sing too bad at all!

LOUISE
Well, that's why I won!

VIOLET
You seem to have a pretty powerful voice . . .

LOUISE
Of course! I sing much stronger than my sister . . .

MARCEL-GERARD
And me?

CREAM
What, you? Were you singing?

LOLA LEE
Louise! You're gonna be able to stay in Montreal after all . . .

LOUISE
Well, I didn't have any intention of leaving!

LOLA LEE
Betty's got a proposition for you . . .

(BETTY heads towards LOUISE, then stops all of a sudden.)

BETTY BIRD
Honey, I think . . . Lola, I've forgotten one detail . . . It's all very nice to want to do something for you, but . . . How much will you give me?

LOLA LEE
What d'ya mean? How much will I give you?

BETTY BIRD
You don't get something for nothing in this bloody world! You know it as well as I do, Rita - Marigold - Lola! I'd like to put a scare into your sister, but I'd also like to get something out of it for me!

LOUISE
Scare me . . .

LOLA LEE

Oh, Jesus Christ!

BETTY BIRD (looking at LOLA)

Louise, your big sister, the star, wants me to offer you a job here while you look for something better somewhere else . . . It's a cute idea, don't you think?

LOUISE

What?

BETTY BIRD

She's quite sure that idea will scare you so much you'll go back home like a good little girl . . .

VIOLET

Oh Honey! What fun . . . . You're gonna work with us, Louise?

LOUISE

No . . . Don't worry about me. I might end up here some day, but I'm gonna start someplace else! Someplace else! Higher up!

TOPAZE

We're not high enough for her!

PURPLE

What luck . . .

LOUISE (to LOLA)

If you wanted to disgust me with all your stories, you've succeeded! But it isn't what all you showed me that disgusts me. It's you!

(Blackout.)

(Spots on LOLA and BETTY)

LOLA LEE (to BETTY)

You goddamn two-faced bitch! You want me to fall on my ass too, eh? You're jealous too 'cause I've got a club that's a success! Well Lola Lee hasn't said her last words yet, you know. I can have your little shackful of floozies closed down pretty damn quick. You know that, don't you? Eh Beatrice? You know that! Well then be careful! Maybe before, you were the one with all the connections, but right now it's yours truly.

BETTY BIRD

There's nothing to stop you. Sure I know you can have my house closed down, and it wouldn't surprise me one bit if you did it. Not one bit! You practically did it when you left here, when you up one night and disappeared into the fog. Do you think this dirty little trick you're pulling, that I'm gonna do it for you just for the fun of it? For nothing? For the pleasure of it? I've got a debt to pay you, Lola Lee, and the day has finally come, and I'm so goddamn happy! If your sister can make it, if she can squash you out like a bug, I'm gonna be so

happy! Louise, if you've got an ounce of talent, go and squash her. You'll be saving my life!

LOLA LEE

What've I done to you, eh? You want to get me 'cause I took off outa here? You want to screw me around 'cause I became somebody instead of moulding away in the bottom of this pit, like Purple?

BETTY BIRD

You've got a short memory, Lola! You know damn well I didn't want you to leave here. All the girls who really want to take off end up doing it some day! But they don't all take off with a part of the cash and my boyfriend, for Christ sake! How is he, Johnny, eh, Lola? How is he? How long's it been since you got any news from him? Has he left you, too, for someone younger and fresher? How long did he stay with you, Lola? One year? Two years? Not even that? Well, when you turned him against me by telling him all sorts of disgusting things about me, we'd been together for eight years, Lola! And I swore to pay you back for that one day! And now maybe that day is here, when I can watch you fall down off your throne!

LOLA LEE

Johnny loved me, Betty!

BETTY BIRD

Me too! He "loved" me too. And he "loved" Purple once too . . . As long as he was with me, I didn't care if he "loved" others too . . . But you . . . Do you know what it did to me when you two took off? As well as losing my man, I lost the most beautiful girl I ever had! When you two up and left with my money and my jewels, I started to go downhill, Lola. Step by step, and then faster and faster! Have you looked at my dress, Lola? Have you taken a good look at it? It's the only one I have left, Lola, and it's starting to get holes in it! All I've got left is one dress and a pack of dimwit girls, Lola! And it's your fault! Take a look around. It's the same wallpaper as when you left. Look at the girls . . . They're the same goddamn old costumes that I've been patching up as much as I can . . . And look at Purple . . . Take a look at Purple! She's the one that puts on your shows in your place! Not too great, eh? My place doesn't get people in anymore, Lola! I don't have a fifth of the customers I used to have! I'm out in the street, Marigold. Are you happy?

LOLA LEE

Johnny, he loved me!

(Projector on LOUISE.)

SONG: JOHNNY-FROM-THE-TABLE-AT-THE-BACK

LOUISE

Me too, my boyfriend's name is Johnny,
But mine, he's nice,
He's nice, mine is,
And if I ask him to come and meet me

I'm pretty sure he'd come running.
No, eh? He's much too independent
To be the boyfriend of Lyla Jasmin.

But if you wanted . . .
But I know I shouldn't ask anything of you
Johnny-from-the-Bar-b-cue,
I'm asking nothing of you
Johnny-from-Saint-Martin,
When you come to Montreal, now,
Maybe it'll be to see me, eh?

Johnny-from-Saint-Martin
Johnny-from-the-Bar-b-cue
Johnny-from-the-table-at-the-back
I love you.

When you leave the Bar-b-cue, now,
Johnny it'll be for me,
Let me believe that, Johnny,
Let me believe a little longer.

PURPLE

If you have a Johnny waiting for you at home, you'd be smart to go back to him.

LOUISE

No. If he doesn't want to come to me here, then I don't care about him. He can stay in Saint-Martin. I'm staying here! I'll make it just as well without him! Yes. I'll make it without him . . . too.

PURPLE

All alone . . .

LOUISE (towards LOLA)

Yes, all alone . . .

LOLA LEE (to BETTY)

You're gonna pay for this!

BETTY BIRD

I don't doubt it. I think I'll be just as well off buying needles and thread . . . I'm not gonna be buying a new dress tomorrow! (to LOUISE) When you've reached the top, Louise, take a deep breath. And take a good look around you, 'cause it won't last very long. It's a beautiful feeling of height, but it's fucking short! I've already been at the top of my career too . . . Oh yeah. I've already been at the top of my career . . . like Lola, but look at what you are when you're at the top . . . Look at your sister. See if she's afraid . . . I've already seen it, Louise, when you're at the height of your career you're ugly because you're afraid. You want to stay by yourself at any price, but that hill it took you so long to climb on foot, you'll be going down again on a bicycle.

SONG: BETTY BIRD'S LIED[56]

BETTY BIRD

In days gone by I was younger
And beautifully slim.
Perversity was my nature, and
I got away with murder!

When I went on a spree,
Dressed in my velvet gown,
Even blind men turned around
To get a better look at me!

I was the great Betty!
The Betty of the hour.
Even Dorothy Lamour
Bowed in reverence to me.

Men sought my heart to buy,
Men battled for my love
And for the pleasure of
My glances they would die . . .

I was the great Betty!
The Betty of the hour.
Even Dorothy Lamour
Bowed in reverence to me.

I had men by the score,
Lovers from every land,
I crushed them in my hands
And shouted, "I want more!"

In days gone by I was younger
And beautifully slim.
Perversity was my nature, and
I got away with murder!

But one fine day a cold
Dry hand caressed my face.
I looked, then I turned away
And knew that I was growing old.

They stormed into my room,
Two spectres, Age and Death,
And while I held my breath
They said, "We'll take you soon!"

In vain I tried to flee.
They wouldn't let me go,
Then I decided, "No,
No one can kill Betty!"

I was the great Betty!
The Betty of the hour.
Even Dorothy Lamour
Bowed in reverence to me.

Yes, Betty Bird's alive,
And though she's fallen down,
She'll get back off the ground
Still struggling to survive!

(Spoken)
There's two birds, baby, and if you don't like it, get out!

In days gone by I was younger
And beautifully slim.
Perversity was my nature, and
I got away with murder!

(The DUCHESS appears in all her "splendour." She moves slowly up to BETTY. They look at each other for a long time.)

(The DUCHESS takes off her coat. She is dressed exactly like BETTY, but more "chic." Newer, in any case.)

(After a long moment, BETTY lowers her head a little, leans on her girls, and goes out, murmuring.)

BETTY BIRD
Back to your rooms, girls, the recreation is over . . .

(MARCEL and CANDY disappear through another door.)

LOLA LEE (to LOUISE)
Did you think it all fell right into my hands just like that? I've worked for twelve years, little girl, to get where I am now, and it was always honest hard work. And I got there on my own, and nobody helped me up! I climbed up by myself! Wearing myself down and clawing my way up! Are you ready to sacrifice twelve years of your life to get what you want, Louise Tétrault! Eh? No! You've gotta do it all right now! Overnight glory! After the Lucille Dumont trophy in Saint-Martin, it's to be the discovery of the year in Montreal, I suppose? And imitating me besides, Louise, imitating me! You can't even find a style of your own! Well I've got news for you, my dear little sister. Your trophy isn't worth a damn in Montreal! Not a fucking thing! You can just shove it! Your trophy isn't gonna get you anywhere in Montreal, Louise! If you want to get to the top in a hurry, there's only one way -- take off your clothes, and lie down in front of a camera. Then you'll "come across" for a while . . . So do it if you want, but don't try imitating me. Try to make your own way if you want, find a place

for yourself, but don't take mine! Take off that wig that looks like mine and go back to your dark hair! I had enough trouble to get on in the world, Louise. I've had enough trouble, and you're not gonna come and push me back down the hill!

SONG: LOLA LEE'S COMPLAINT[57]

LOLA LEE

As soon as you get off the bus
And you ain't got one cent to spare,
You find a seat, shake off the dust,
And take your lipstick out and fix your hair.

You close your eyes and you plunge in,
You smear on make-up left and right,
You've got to look good to begin,
The more you slap it on, the more they'll like it.

You start in waitressing at first,
Or if they like your looks, you dance,
You do it all, topless or worse,
And think this may be your big chance!

You close your eyes and you go on,
You dance, you strip, you sell your soul,
You want some guy to come along
Who'll see your talent and your final goal.

And if you find that guy, hold on.
Jump on his back, don't let him go.
And if he wants things in return,
Well then you marry him. (You can't say "no.")

You close your eyes and you go on!
To small-time agents every day,
Through small-time contracts, one by one,
And by and by your effort starts to pay.

And if there's someone next to you
Who wants your place and thinks she's smart,
You stomp her down with steel-toed shoes,
Or else you'll end up right back where you started!

You close your eyes and carry on.
You must climb up, you must advance,
And even if you're tired, go on,
'Cause if you rest you haven't got a chance.

And when your name starts to be known,
Get rid of all your enemies.
You want your stardom for your own,
So then at last you'll have life easy!

You close your eyes and you go on!
You finally become a star,
Pretending you did nothing wrong,
Forgetting everything but where you are!

Don't look behind, always look ahead.
You can't stop now or your career is dead.
And if there's someone left you knock her down
To reach the height of all your power!

You close your eyes and go on up,
At last there's no more steps to climb.
Alone and out of beeath, you've reached the top.
There's no one in front of you, and, you feel fine!

But still there's people you distrust,
You've got to watch out for the others,
And if one comes in off the bus,
You crush her dreams and send her home to mother!
You crush her dreams and send her home to mother!
You crush her dreams and send her home to mother!

(After the song, LOLA pulls off LOUISE's wig and throws it on the floor.)

(LOLA begins to shout into the mike.)

LOLA LEE

And now, ladies and gentlemen, the Bolivar Lounge is happy to present the exhilirating revue, Lola Lee Lolo, featuring: Lola Lee!

LOUISE

No! Lyla Jasmin!

SONG: BRASILIA SHINES[58]

EVERYBODY

The sun is all turned around,
The moon is all upside down,
The sky's gone underground,
The whole world's come unwound,

But . . .

My head is churning around,
My senses are all unwound,
My life has hit the ground,
My heart is upside down,

But . . .

Brazil is beaming,
Brasilia, Brasilia cries,

Brazil is crying,
Brasilia, Brasilia gleams.

The flowers are all upside down,
The trees are turning around,
The lakes are upside down,
The whole world's come unwound,

But . . .

Your heads are churning around,
Your senses are all unwound,
Your lives have hit the ground,
Your hearts are upside down,

But . . .

Brazil is screaming,
Brasilia, Brasilia shines,
Brazil is shining,
Brasilia, Brasilia screams.
America's burning,
All America's turned around,
America's crying,
America's all upside down.
In Brazil, in Brasilia,
In Brasilia, in Brazil.

(Snake dances, flutes, confetti, etc.)

(During the song, LOUISE leaves the scene and comes back dressed "Brazilian" style. A "danced" struggle begins between the two sisters.)

That's all!

NOTES

1. This form of address in French almost always includes "Mesdemoiselles" (unmarried women) in addition to "Mesdames" (ladies) and "Messieurs" (gentlemen.)

2. The distinction between "le gagnant" (male winner) and "la gagnante" (female winner) in the original text is lost in the use of the simple "winner" in English. The problem of nouns and adjectives which change form according to gender in French occurs frequently in the translation of this play. In a case such as this one, where it is not crucial to the effect of the line, the distinction is ignored in the English text.

3. This translation has attempted to render the lines for certain characters into a colloquial English spelling in the assumption that an actor would use these spellings as a guide to further development of the pronunciation and delivery of the lines rather than as a strict form which must be followed exactly.

4. "J'suppose que tu vas devenir vedette tu-suite de même, en criant ciseau?" is the original line. "En criant ciseau" is a virtually untranslatable expression corresponding roughly to "just like that."

5. The expression, "to fall on her ass," is used to stand for "se casser la yeule," which means more literally "to break her mouth," as in "trap" or "yap."

6. This song, along with several others, has been adapted to be sung to the music of the version of Demain matin Montréal m'attend recorded on Les Disques Belles-soeurs. Tomorrow Morning, Montreal!,

more literally translated, is as follows:

LOUISE
Tomorrow morning Montreal awaits me,
Tomorrow morning Montreal awaits me,
Don't look for me anymore in Saint-Martin
Because tomorrow I'm taking off!
To the city! To the city!

CHORUS
You'll go riding on the métro
You'll get your clothes from Le Château
Walk along Plaza Saint-Hubert
Saint Catherine Street, and the Oratory
You'll be going to eat at the Pam Pam,
Visiting the Church of Notre Dame
You'll be meeting big stars
No more need for channel seven.

LOUISE and CHORUS
Tomorrow morning Montreal awaits me, etc.

CHORUS
You'll be received at Mayor Drapeau's,
You'll go over to channel ten,
You'll start making records,
Péladeau's front pages.

LOUISE
I'll arrive with my trophy,
They'll all fall at my feet,
I'm gonna be a big star
Surrounded by furs and faggots.

LOUISE and CHORUS
Tomorrow morning Montreal awaits me, etc.

LOUISE
You'll never see me here again,
The little waitress is gonna change,
She's gonna become a great legend
And all Saint-Martin's gonna be talking about it.

The line, "<u>En ville!</u>" is left untranslated in the English text of the play as it is much more "singable" than any English equivalent. Further, as this line is used as a refrain for its sonorous quality as much as for its meaning, it was felt that the meaning could be sacrificed without detracting seriously from the song.

In this song, a number of specific places with which a

Montrealer would be familiar are named. All the activities that LOUISE and the CHORUS rave about are tourist attractions and things one would hear advertised in the media, but which are not as spectacular as LOUISE's excitement would suggest. The Pam Pam, for instance, is a low-price restaurant frequented mainly by students with little money -- hardly an elegant dining experience. Likewise, the reference to Péladeau's front pages is meant ironically. Péladeau is the publisher of numerous Montreal tabloid newspapers of the more sensational variety -- hardly the coverage a more sophisticated star would aspire to.

7. "Où c'est que tu t'en vas, comme ça, gros'Jean comme devant?" is the original line, meaning roughly "Where are you going like that, all steamed up and full of beans?"

8. The original line here is "Sans valise, ni rien, comme une tout-nue!" which means more literally "without a suitcase, or anything, like someone who is destitute and has nothing."

9. "Gang de caves" in the original, meaning more literally "gang of vacant people."

10. LOLA LEE

I approached slowly
Like I usually do, with my gloves,
Propped on his elbows on the bar, he was drinking
A whisky soda with milk . . .
I took his head in my hands,
I put his head between my breasts,
And I said:

Do you dance the Charleston, Heston?
If you don't dance the Charleston, Heston,
Lola the gloved tigress, is a . . .
Dead girl! Finished! Washed up! Heston!

But whether they're called Nestor or Heston,
Donald, Marcel, Richard or Burton,
Roger, Gordon, Albert, or even Ben,
They all, without exception, find me ancient.

I take their heads between my hands,
I put their heads between my breasts,
But there's no one anymore who dances the Charleston, Heston,
No, there's no one anymore to dance the Charleston, Heston,
If you don't dance the Charleston, Heston,
Lola, the gloved tigress, is one . . .

11. The puppets, Pépinot and Capucine, were the main characters in the puppet show, Pépinot, a Radio-Canada French-language television series.

12. "Tricoter une nouvelle choréographie," literally, "to knit" a new choreography.

13. The BOY has used the familiar "tu" form of address. LOLA LEE replies that she never gave him permission "de me tutoyer," to use the "tu" form when talking to her. In the English text the motivation for LOLA LEE's line must come from the familiar tone of the BOY's speech rather than from the words he uses.

14. "C'est ça, la piasse! Toujours la piasse!" "Piasse" is a Joual term which roughly corresponds to the English slang word, "buck," for "dollar."

15. Mistinguett was the stage name of Jeanne Bourgeois (1875-1956), a French actress and star of the music halls. Known for her shapely legs and her vibrant stage personality, she was the featured attraction on the stages of such Parisian music halls as the Moulin-Rouge, the Folies Bergère, and the Casino de Paris.

16. "Petite cachotière" -- one who makes a secret of things.

17. "Mais c't'un joli trou par exemple." "But it's a pretty hole, for instance."

18. Mon Credo is one of the songs for which French singer, Mireille Matthieu, is well-known.

19. The Reno sisters, Ginette and Huguette, began as a singing

team in Montreal. Ginette Reno has since struck out on her own to become a well-known Quebec singer.

20. The expletive, "bitch," is added in the English text. In the French an expletive is understood here, without being said: "Hein, ma petite . . . "

21. "That's real nice of you," is used to take the place of ". . . t'es ben blood!" which translates perhaps more closely as "You're real terrific!"

22. "ma petite viarge." Literally, "my little virgin," an extremely vulgar expression in French.

23. LOUISE

Thank-you Lucille! Thank-you Lucille!
It's thanks to you that I'm in the city
And from this day on
Louise Tétrault will become . . . Lyla Jasmin!

Lyla Jasmin! Lyla Jasmin!
For years I've been thinking about it
To see my name in Montréal-Matin
Advertising me at the Club Renaissance!

Lyla Jasmin! Lyla Jasmin!
For years I've been dreaming
For years I've been dying
To sing in the chic "Quartier Latin."

Thank-you Lucille! Thank-you Lucille! etc.

My name's gonna be in all the papers
Everyone's gonna recognize me in the streets!
Another Gaétane Létourneau
Look at her, did you get a good look at her!
She's the biggest star in Montreal
They're producing a revue just for her
She's the new Muriel
She's the vamp who does such wicked things!
It's to her that the most discerning men
Throw camelias, orchids, roses
It's on her that all Music Hall rests!
I'm the biggest!
I'm the best!
The new queen of Music Hall!

Thank-you Lucille! Thank-you Lucille! etc.

"Merci" was retained in the English text instead of "thank-you" because of its sonority in a particularly crucial part of the music. Since even the most superficial knowledge of French usually includes the word, "merci," it was felt that, especially in the light of LOUISE's last statement before the song, the meaning would not be lost.

24. Montréal-Matin is a daily tabloid newspaper in Montreal.

25. A popular singer and actress of reknown in Quebec.

26. Muriel Millard, a popular music-hall-style singer in Quebec.

27. The original text refers to these characters as "travestis," a term which encompasses both the idea of travesty and of transvestite. It will be noted that in the cast list, only some of the characters in this group of "travestis" are, in fact, transvestites, i.e. dressed in the clothes of the opposite sex. Others are dressed in costumes which although not technically transvestite, are definitely a sort of parody or travesty of a certain style of dressing. CUIRETTE, for example, as his name suggests, is dressed in the leather and chains outfit of the motorcycle "freak," much more a travesty than a transvestite. He, along with MARCEL-GERARD, SLIM, and COWBOY are the "masculine" members of the group, whereas the other transvestites identify themselves with females.

28. Strictly, "like a good little Quebecois girl." "French-Canadian" was substituted to give the phrase more of a patronizing tone.

29. A preparation used for delousing. The word "onguent," meaning simply "ointment" is used in the original.

30. ". . . pour se chiffonner le chignon." More literally, "to muss up our hairdo's."

31. "Y'est tout mêlé dans son français, elle . . . " in the original. This refers to the previous line spoken by MARCEL-GERARD who

is attempting to express himself in a formal manner. The original line really says "She-he's all mixed up in his French."

32. "Avant de se dévorer les unes . . . les uns les autres," means more literally, "before devouring each other (feminine) . . . each other (masculine.) The confusion over gender is indicated in this version by the use of "girls" and "guys."

33. The original sentence is "C'est du satin pur laine," which means literally, "It's satin, pure wool." "Pur laine" is an expression meaning "absolutely pure" and can roughly be translated by the expression, "dyed in the wool." The original intention is humourous in this case as it refers to a fabric, one which obviously has nothing to do with wool.

34. In the original text, one word, "annales," serves both English meanings, "annals" and "anals."

35. In the original text BRIGITTE says, "A portait pus à terre . . . ," and CUIRETTE replies, "Non, a portait à gauche . . . ." More literally this means, "She wasn't carrying herself on the ground anymore: she was carrying on the left." The latter expression refers to dressing with the genitals on the left side of the crotch seam.

36. LOLA LEE

From the first to the last
From the blondest to the darkest
The more handsome they are, Louise, yes,
The more handsome they are,
The more you have to mistrust them! My friends!

When a nice-looking guy wants to come close to you
It's not always with the intention of having you
They make you suffer, Louise, yes, they make you suffer!
Then they start to find you boring! Very boring!

Look around you
Look at them the way you should
The guys who are here, Louise, yes,
The guys who are here
You've seen them all on the T.V.!

From the first to the last . . . etc.

37. The DUCHESS's name is really Edouard, the French form of Edward. It was felt here that the name, Edouard, in the English text, would have too much of a high-class ring to it to justify the hilarity it sparks in MARCEL-GERARD. The English form is used in the translation to give the DUCHESS's name a more common touch.

38. ". . . parce qu'y va se fâcher blond, blond, blond," is the original wording which indicates how angry MARCEL will get -- "blond, blond, blond." This is a somewhat insulting statement aimed at MARCEL's image as a man.

39. In the original text, MARCEL, in the previous speech, says, "J'aime pas qu'on se paye me tête." He doesn't like people "paying for his head." The DUCHESS's reply is that no one in Montreal can afford to "pay for such a head." The expression, "se payer la tête de quelqu'un," means, roughly, "to laugh at someone." The pun is lost in the translation.

40. The pun in these lines in the original text revolves around the word, "carrière." MARCEL says to the DUCHESS that he forbids her to speak of him in the feminine form because it could jeopardize his career (carrière.) The DUCHESS replies by asking, "Quelle carrière! Ta carrière de marbre dans le désert du Névada?" In this sense the other meaning of "carrière," which is "quarry," is used. She is saying, "Your marble quarry in the Nevada desert?"

41. DUCHESS
She plays the woman of the world and she doesn't have a clue how to
She has no more culture than the last woman on earth
She has an accent that's hard on your ears!
You can take the girl out of the east end but not the east end out of the girl!

MARCEL-GERARD
Bitch!

LOLA LEE
You should talk, great lady of Hollywood
You're even worse with your stories that don't hold water!
You don't look like a duchess, you look like Camilien Houde
Who's gotten too fat and who suffers from gout!

DUCHESS
Bitch! Bitch! etc.

MARCEL-GERARD
If Lola Lee is really called Rita Tétrault
Rita Tétrault is gonna pay for Lola Lee
She's hated me for nothing when she's read my columns
Now at least she'll have a reason and it's none too soon!

LOLA LEE
Bitch! Bitch! etc.

LOLA LEE
I forbid you to write about me in your paper

MARCEL-GERARD
You can forbid me nothing, it's my legal right

DUCHESS
Let's go, little girls, you're starting to get it going!

MARCEL and LOLA
You, duchess, shut your yap, and let us have our row!

LOLA, MARCEL and THE DUCHESS
We spend most of our time bickering
We love each other, hate each other, adore each other, we're all mixed up!
We're not throwing stones at each other, we're pitching pebbles.
But it's good for our publicity and that's why we . . .
Bitch!

42. A mayor of Montreal for most of the period between 1928 and 1954.

43. The expression in the original text is "sur les madriers," meaning literally, "on the thick planks."

44. "Barbuse" is an invented term created from the word, "barbu," meaning "bearded man." Owing to the specific circumstances of its use, the invention of this "feminized" form has a humourous effect in the original text.

45. PURPLE
Do you know Betty Bird?
She's no ordinary bird
She doesn't give a damn what she looks like
Or what people think of her . . .

THE GIRLS
Des birds, des birds, etc.

PURPLE
For her a bird's a twenty dollar bill
When you come here, be careful what you do
They take off forever
But look what you get in return . . .

THE GIRLS
Des birds, des birds, etc.

PURPLE
Betty Bird's is the Orient
It's silks, it's pearls, and even incense
Betty Bird's is marijuana
In little rooms especially for it
Her girls are all specialized
There are redheads, and curls
There are blondes and brunettes
Who can give you even moonlight!
When you leave in the wee small hours
You're finished off, but you feel good
You turn around, you wave good-bye
But the light is turned out!

THE GIRLS
Do you know Betty Bird? . . . etc.

46. BUTCH's line here is "Un vrai métier de . . . " ("a real job of a . . . .") The missing word is "pute," meaning "whore." The completed expression is extremely vulgar, giving rise to BETTY's subsequent admonition.

47. The original sentence is, "On n'est pas des soeurs cloîtrées, simonaque!" More literally this translates as, "We're not cloistered nuns . . . ." "Simonaque" is a curse word of religious derivation.

48. "J'ai couru comme un bon . . . euh, comme une bonne . . . ," is the original statement. CANDY is confused as to his-her own gender, as indicated by the use of both forms -- bon-bonne.

49. The song, Hello Baby, is written in English in the original text.

50. This and the preceding speech contain a pun in the original. LOLA says, "On rentre toujours icitte comme dans un moulin." BUTCH's reply, "J'te dis qu'on en moud . . . ," completes the pun -- moulin (mill) and moudre (to crush.) The references to the factory and the assembly line in the English are an attempt to approximate the pun in the original.

51. The form of greeting, "Bonjour," is here left in its literal meaning, "Good day," to fit in with the next line.

52. Although this song is not adapted for a musical rendition, the translation attempts to approximate as much of the original alliteration as possible while at the same time reproducing the meaning in a literal fashion.

53. A popular French-language television series.

54. La Petite Aurore, l'enfant martyr was one of the first films produced in Quebec, made in 1951 under the direction of Jean-Yves Bigras. The story concerns a young child, Aurore, who suffers pain and torture at the hands of her cruel mother. The film is well-known in Quebec and today could almost be considered a part of Quebecois folklore.

55. The patron saint of lost causes and hopeless cases.

56. BETTY BIRD

It was in my youth
In the time when I was slim
I committed some crimes!
In the time when I was perverse!

When I appeared in the evening
In my velvet dress
All the men, even the deaf ones
Turned around to look at me!

I was the great Betty
I was the "Betty of the day"
Even Dorothy Lamour
Bowed in deference to me!

They bought me for gold
They fought over me
They killed themselves over me
I was "Betty-la-mort!"

I was the great Betty, etc.

I walked over the bodies
Crushing diamonds
Crushing my lovers
I shouted, "I want more!"

It was in my youth, etc.

But one fine day
In the middle of a caress
Old age appeared
In its serpent's skin

I didn't even have to
Open up the door
It came with its escort
And said to me, "Tomorrow!"

I tried to forget
I tried to forget
And then I told myself,
"They can't kill Betty!"

I was the great Betty, etc.

Betty Bird's not dead
Betty Bird's struggling
She knows she's come down a long way
But she has to get back up again!

57. LOLA LEE

When you get off the bus
And you don't have a penny in your pocket
You sit down on the bus station bench
And you take your lipstick out of your handbag!

You close your eyes and you start in
You smear over your lips as best you can
The more you put on, the more they like it
The more you slap it on, the happier they are!

You find a little job as a waitress
As a cigarette girl or as a dancer
Doing tangos, cha cha's, or even topless
Already you consider yourself lucky!

You close your eyes and you start in!
You dance, you take off your clothes, you sell yourself
And you try to find yourself some guy
Who'll notice you've got some talent!

You find one; you jump on him
Hang on. Don't let him go
And if he wants anything in return
Marry him even if you can think of nothing worse!

You close your eyes and you jump in!
You run after all the little agents
You run after all the little contracts
And you start to make a little money!

If there's somebody next to you
Who's being catty, who's being smart with you
Get rid of them with a few kicks
Without that, you're gonna find yourself at the bottom all over again!

You close your eyes and you start in!
You have to climb, you have to get on
If you're tired, don't rest
'Cause then you haven't got a goddamn chance!

When your name starts to become known
Eliminate all your adversaries
You have to be alone on your own path
And be a star without acting like one!

You close your eyes and you start in!
At last you become a big star
You pretend you don't remember any more
And you forget all the degrading things you've done!

You always have to look ahead
You can never look behind
And if there's still someone else there, you've got to put her down
'Cause you're not at the end of your career!

You close your eyes and you start in!
You arrive at last at the end of the road
You're all alone, you're out of breath, but you're there
There's nobody left ahead of you, and you feel good!

Then you have to think of the next day
You have to watch out for the ones who come behind

And if you see one get off the train
You finish her off and send her home to her mother!
You finish her off and send her home to her mother!
You finish her off and send her home to her mother!

58. EVERYBODY

The sun is upside down
The moon is upside down
The sky is upside down
The world is upside down
But . . .
My head is upside down
My senses are upside down
My life is upside down
My heart is upside down
But . . .

Brazil shines!
Brasilia cries!
Brazil cries!
Brasilia shines!

The flowers are upside down
The trees are upside down
The lakes are upside down
The world is upside down
But . . .
Your heads are upside down
Your senses are upside down
Your lives are upside down
Your hearts are upside down
But . . .

Brazil shines
Brasilia cries
Brazil cries
Brasilia shines
America burns
America's upside down
America cries
America's upside down
In Brazil! In Brasilia!
In Brasilia! In Brazil!

FIRST PRODUCTIONS AND PUBLICATIONS OF PLAYS

BY MICHEL TREMBLAY*

1964 -- Le Train produced on CBFT (Radio-Canada television), Montreal. (June.) Winner of the Concours des Jeunes Auteurs.

1966 -- En pièces détachées produced at Le Patriote theatre, Montreal, by Le Mouvement Contemporain.

1968 -- Les Belles-soeurs produced at Le Théâtre du Rideau Vert, Montreal. (August 28.) Directed by André Brassard.

-- Les Belles-soeurs published in Théâtre Vivant No. 6, Holt, Rinehart et Winston et C.E.A.D.

1969 -- La Duchesse de Langeais produced by Les Insolents de Val d'Or, in Val d'Or, Quebec. (Spring.) Directed by Hélène Bélanger.

-- Demain matin Montréal m'attend produced at Théâtre de l'Expo, Montreal. (Summer.) Directed by André Brassard.

-- Le Train produced at le Théâtre de la Place Ville Marie, Montreal.

-- En pièces détachées produced at Théâtre de Quat'Sous, Montreal.

-- Trois petits tours produced on CBFT, Montreal. (December.)

1970 -- En pièces détachées with La Duchesse de Langeais published by Leméac, Montréal.

1971 -- Trois petits tours published by Leméac, Quebec.

-- À toi, pour toujours, ta Marie-Lou produced at Théâtre de Quat-Sous, Montreal. (April 20.) Directed by André Brassard.

-- À toi, pour toujours, ta Marie-Lou published by Leméac, Montreal.

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* This list does not include plays translated and adapted by Michel Tremblay.

-- En pièces détachées produced for television by Radio-Canada. (March 6, 1972 and July 23, 1972.)

1972 -- Demain matin Montréal m'attend produced at Théâtre Maisonneuve of the Place des Arts, Montreal by Les Productions Buissonneau Inc. (March 16.) Directed by André Brassard.

-- Demain matin Montréal m'attend published by Leméac, Montreal.

-- Forever Yours, Marie-Lou, translated by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco, produced at the Tarragon Theatre, Toronto. (November 4.) Directed by Bill Glassco.

-- Les Belles-soeurs published by Leméac, Montreal.

-- En pièces détachées published by Leméac, Montreal.

1973 -- Like Death Warmed Over (En pièces détachées), translated by Allan Van Meer, produced in English by The Manitoba Theatre Centre, Winnipeg. (January.) Directed by André Brassard.

-- Like Death Warmed Over (En pièces détachées) published by Playwrights Co-op, Toronto.

-- Les Belles-soeurs, translated by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco, produced in English at St. Lawrence Centre, Toronto. (April 3.) Directed by André Brassard.

-- Hosanna produced at Théâtre de Quat'Sous, Montreal. (May 10.) Directed by André Brassard.

-- Hosanna with La Duchesse de Langeais published by Leméac, Ottawa.

1974 -- Hosanna, translated by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco, produced in English at the Tarragon Theatre, Toronto. (May 15.) Directed by Bill Glassco. This same production opened on Broadway at the Bijou Theatre, New York City. (October 14.)

-- Bonjour là, bonjour produced by La Compagnie des Deux Chaises, Ottawa. (August 22.) Directed by André Brassard. Subsequent performances were held in Quebec, Montreal, Shawinigan, and Sherbrooke.

-- Bonjour là, bonjour published by Leméac, Montreal.

-- Hosanna, translated by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco, published by Talonbooks, Vancouver.

-- Les Belles-soeurs, translated by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco, published by Talonbooks, Vancouver.

-- Il était une fois dans l'est, film in collaboration with André Brassard. Canada's entry into the 1974 Cannes Film Festival.

1975 -- Bonjour là, bonjour, translated by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco, produced in English at the Tarragon Theatre, Toronto. (February 1.) Directed by Bill Glassco.

-- Bonjour là, bonjour published by Talonbooks, Vancouver.

-- Forever Yours, Marie-Lou, translated by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco, published by Talonbooks, Vancouver.

1976 -- Sainte Carmen de la Main produced by La Compagnie Jean Duceppe, Montreal. (July 20.) Directed by André Brassard. The production closed after three performances.

-- Sainte Carmen de la Main published by Leméac, Montreal.

-- Les héros de mon enfance produced by La Compagnie du Théâtre de Marjolaine at Eastman. Directed by Gaétan Labrèche.

-- Les héros de mon enfance published by Leméac, Montreal.

1977 -- Le soleil se lève en retard, a film, opened in Montreal. (February .)

-- Damnée Manon, sacrée Sandra produced at Théâtre de Quat'Sous, Montreal. (February.)

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A. Works by Michel Tremblay

Tremblay, Michel. À toi, pour toujours, ta Marie-Lou. Introduction by Michel Bélair. Collection Théâtre Canadien, No. 21. Montréal: Leméac, 1971.

_____. Les Belles-soeurs. Introduction by Alain Pontaut. Collection Théâtre Canadien. Montréal: Leméac, 1972.

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MICHEL TREMBLAY

Michel Tremblay was born June 25, 1942 in a working-class district of east-end Montreal. As a student he trained in the area of graphic arts and from 1963 to 1966 he worked as a printer. His first play, Le Train, which he wrote at the age of seventeen, won first prize in a Radio-Canada contest for young authors in 1964. Since that time he has written ten plays, three novels (Contes pour buveurs attardés, 1966; La Cité dans l'oeuf, 1969; and C'ta ton tour, Laura Cadieux, 1973), and he has translated and adapted six plays into French for Quebec audiences (Aristophanes' Lysistrata, 1969; L'effet des rayons gamma sur les vieux garçons, from Paul Zindel, 1970; Et Mademoiselle Roberge boit en peu, from Paul Zindel, 1970; Au pays du dragon, from Tennessee Williams, 1972; Dario Fo's Mistero Buffo, 1973; and Mademoiselle Marguerite, from Roberto Athayde, 1975.) Tremblay works closely with his friend, André Brassard, who has been the director of nearly all productions of Tremblay's works in French as well as several productions in English. Together, Tremblay and Brassard have become major forces in the theatrical life of Quebec and Canada. They have collaborated on two films, Il était une fois dans l'est, 1974, and Le soleil se lève en retard, 1977.

Michel Tremblay has received a number of awards for his writing, including the Victor-Morin Prize awarded by the Saint-Jean Baptiste Society of Montreal. He is currently at work on a novel and on a cycle of ten songs for singer, Pauline Julien.